

Free Grace Broadcaster

ISSUE 170

THE GODLY HOME

*“He will command his children
and his household after him,
and they shall keep the
way of the LORD.”*

Genesis 18:19

Our Purpose

*“To humble the pride of man,
to exalt the grace of God in salvation,
and to promote real holiness in heart and life.”*

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#170

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FAMILY WORSHIP

Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

THERE are some very important outward ordinances and means of grace that are plainly implied in the Word of God, but for the exercise of which we have few, if any, plain and positive precept; rather are we left to gather them from the example of holy men and from various incidental circumstances. An important end is answered by this arrangement: trial is thereby made of the state of our hearts. It serves to make evident whether, because an expressed command cannot be brought requiring its performance, professing Christians will neglect a duty plainly implied. Thus, more of the real state of our minds is discovered, and it is made manifest whether we have or have not an ardent love for God and His service. This holds good both of public and family worship. Nevertheless, it is not at all difficult to prove the obligation of domestic piety.

Consider first the example of Abraham, the father of the faithful and the friend of God. It was for his domestic piety that he received blessing from Jehovah Himself: *“For I know him, that he will command his children and household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment”* (Gen 18:19). The patriarch is here commended for instructing his children and servants in the most important of all duties, “the way of the Lord”—the truth about His glorious person, His high claims upon us, His requirements from us. Note well the words *“he will command”* them, that is, he would use the authority God had given him as a father and head of his house to enforce the duties of family godliness. Abraham also prayed with as well as instructed his family: wherever he pitched his tent, there he *“built an altar to the Lord”* (Gen 12:7; 13:4). Now, my readers, we may well ask ourselves, Are we *“Abraham’s seed”* (Gal 3:29) if we *“do not the works of Abraham”* (Joh 8:39) and neglect the weighty duty of family worship? The examples of other holy men are similar to that of Abraham’s. Consider the pious determination of Joshua who declared to Israel, *“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”* (24:15). Neither the exalted station that he held, nor the pressing public duties that developed upon him, were allowed to crowd out his attention to the spiritual well-being of his family. Again, when David brought back the ark of God to Jerusalem with joy and thanksgiving, after discharging his public duties, he *“returned to bless his household”* (2Sa 6:20). In addition to these eminent examples we may cite the cases of Job (1:5) and Daniel (6:10). Limiting ourselves to only one in the New Testament, we think of the history of Timothy, who was reared in a godly home. Paul called to remembrance the *“unfeigned faith”* that was in him, and added, *“which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice.”* Is there any wonder then that the apostle could say *“from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures”* (2Ti 3:15)!

On the other hand, we may observe what fearful threatenings are pronounced against those who disregard this duty. We wonder how many of our readers have seriously pon-

dered these awe-inspiring words: *“Pour out Thy fury upon the heathen that know Thee not, and upon the families that call not on Thy name”* (Jer 10:25)! How unspeakably solemn to find that prayerless families are here coupled with the heathen that know not the Lord. Yet need that surprise us? Why, there are many heathen families who unite together in worshiping their false gods. And do not they put thousands of professing Christians to shame? Observe too that Jeremiah 10:25 recorded a fearful imprecation upon both classes alike: *“Pour out Thy fury upon...”* How loudly should these words speak to us.

It is not enough that we pray as private individuals in our closets; we are required to honor God in our families as well. At least twice each day, in the morning and in the evening, *the whole household should be gathered together* to bow before the Lord—parents and children, master and servant—to confess their sins, to give thanks for God’s mercies, to seek His help and blessing. Nothing must be allowed to interfere with this duty: all other domestic arrangements are to bend to it. The head of the house is the one to lead the devotions, but if he be absent, or seriously ill, or an unbeliever, then the wife would take his place. Under no circumstances should family worship be omitted. If we would enjoy the blessing of God upon our family, then let its members gather together daily for praise and prayer. *“Them that honour me I will honour”* is His promise.

An old writer well said, *“A family without prayer is like a house without a roof, open and exposed to all the storms of Heaven.”* All our domestic comforts and temporal mercies issue from the lovingkindness of the Lord, and the best we can do in return is to gratefully acknowledge, together, His goodness to us as a family. Excuses against the discharge of this sacred duty are idle and worthless. Of what avail will it be when we render an account to God for the stewardship of our families to say that we had not time available, working hard from morn till eve? The more pressing be our temporal duties, the greater our need of seeking spiritual succor. Nor may any Christian plead that he is not qualified for such a work: gifts and talents are developed by use and not by neglect.

Family worship should be conducted *reverently, earnestly, and simply*. It is then that the little ones will receive their first impressions and form their initial conceptions of the Lord God. Great care needs to be taken lest a false idea be given them of the divine Character, and for this the balance must be preserved between dwelling upon His transcendency and immanency, His holiness and His mercy, His might and His tenderness, His justice and His grace. Worship should begin with a few words of prayer invoking God’s presence and blessing. A short passage from His Word should follow, with brief comments thereon. Two or three verses of a Psalm may be sung. Close with a prayer of committal into the hands of God. Though we may not be able to pray eloquently, we should earnestly. Prevailing prayers are usually brief ones. Beware of wearying the young ones.

The advantages and blessings of family worship are incalculable. First, family worship will prevent much sin. It awes the soul, conveys a sense of God’s majesty and authority, sets solemn truths before the mind, brings down benefits from God on the home. *Personal piety in the home is a most influential means, under God, of conveying piety on*

the little ones. Children are largely creatures of imitation, loving to copy what they see in others.

“He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments” (Psa 78:5-7). How much of the dreadful moral and spiritual conditions of the masses today may be traced back to the neglect of their fathers in this duty? How can those who neglect the worship of God in their families look for peace and comfort therein? Daily prayer in the home is a blessed means of grace for allaying those unhappy passions to which our common nature is subject. Finally, family prayer gains for us the presence and blessing of the Lord. There is a promise of His presence that is peculiarly applicable to this duty (see Mat 18:19-20). Many have found in family worship that help and communion with God which they sought for and with less effect in private prayer.

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Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952): Pastor, itinerate Bible teacher, voluminous author of *Studies in the Scriptures* and many books including his well-known *The Sovereignty of God*. Born in Great Britain, immigrated to the USA, and later returned to his homeland in 1934.



“Family prayer and the pulpit are the bulwarks of Protestantism! Depend upon it, when family piety goes down, the life of godliness will become very low. In Europe, at any rate, seeing that the Christian faith began with a converted household, we ought to seek after the conversion of all our families and to maintain within our houses the good and holy practice of family worship.” —*Charles H. Spurgeon*

THE DUTIES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES

Richard Steele (1629-1692)

“Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”—Ephesians 5:33

MARRIAGE is the foundation of all society, and so this topic is very important. Explaining marital duties to you is much easier than persuading you to do them. Conform your will to Scripture, not vice versa. Take Ephesians 5:33 to heart.

1. The Connection

“Nevertheless” is a transition from the spiritual reality of Christ’s relationship to the Church. It either means that in spite of the unattainable ideal, strive to attain it, or because of the noble example, imitate it, in your relationship with your spouse.

2. The Direction

A. The universal obligation of it. “Let each one of you,” no matter how good you are or how bad your spouse. All husbands are entitled to their wives’ respect, whether they are wise or foolish, intelligent or slow, skillful or clumsy. All wives are entitled to their husbands’ love, whether beautiful or ugly, rich or poor, submissive or rebellious.

B. The particular application of it. “In particular,” each and every husband and wife should apply this to their own particular case.

3. Summary of Duties

A. Every husband’s duty: To love his wife. This is not the only duty, but it includes all others. He should love her as himself. This is both how (the Golden Rule) and why he is to love her (because they are both really one, loving her will result in blessings to him).

B. Every wife’s duty: To fear (Greek) or reverence (KJV) or respect (NKJV) her husband, both for his person and his position. This necessarily includes love, because if she loves him, she will try to please him and avoid offending him.

**Doctrine: Every husband should love his wife as himself,
and every wife should respect her husband.**

Remember, this is your Creator’s counsel, clearly articulated in both the Old and New Testaments, and by both Paul the apostle to Gentiles (Eph 5:22 ff.; Col 3:18 ff.) and Peter the apostle to Jews (1Pe 3:1 ff.). These two duties (husband-love, wife-respect) are not exhaustive, but are mentioned particularly either because they are the most common failures of each or because they include all other duties. Another explanation is that respect is what husbands need most, and love, what wives need most, from their spouses. God counsels not only that we may have eternal life, but comfort here and now. A godly marriage is a bit of heaven on earth. Reviewing these duties should humble us for our past failures, and challenge us to future improvement.

The Duties Belonging to Both Alike

1. *Living with Each Other.* He must “leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife” (Gen 2:24), and she must “forget her own people also, and her father’s house” (Psa 45:10). He must “dwell with his wife” (1Pe 3:7), and she must not “depart from her husband,” even if he is an unbeliever (1Co 7:10). The other duties of marriage require living together, as regular sexual relations, which they both owe each other (1Co 7:3-5). The Old Testament prohibits husbands from going to war during their first year of marriage (Deu 24:5). This shows the importance of living together.

2. *Loving Each Other.* This is both the husband’s (Col 3:19) and the wife’s duty (Ti 2:4). Love is the great reason and comfort of marriage. This love is not merely romance, but genuine and constant affection and care for each other “fervently with a pure heart” (1Pe 1:22). Marital love cannot be based on beauty or wealth, for these are passing, and not even on piety, for that may decay. It must be based upon God’s command which never changes. The marriage vow obliges “for better or for worse,” and married persons ought to consider their own spouses the best in the world for them. Marital love must be durable, lasting even after death has severed the bond (Pro 31:12). This true-hearted love brings true content and comfort in its train. It guards against adultery and jealousy. It prevents or lessens family trouble. Without it, the marriage is like a bone out of joint: there is pain until it is restored.

3. *Staying Faithful to Each Other.* Every man should have (sexually) his own wife, and every wife her own husband (1Co 7:2), and only their own. Imitate the first Adam who had but one wife and the second Adam Who has but one Church. The marriage covenant binds you to your own spouse as the dearest, sweetest, and best in the world. The slightest infidelity, *even in the heart*, may lead to full-blown adultery. Without repentance, adultery destroys both earthly happiness and reasonable expectation of heaven. It almost dissolves marriage, and in the OT was a capital crime (Deu 22:22). Be careful to avoid temptations to this sin. The man who is not satisfied with one woman will never be satisfied with many, because this sin has no boundaries. Faithfulness also involves keeping each other’s secrets. These must not be disclosed unless there is a greater obligation. Telling your spouse’s secrets is bad when accidental, worse when the result of temper, and the worst when it is motivated by hate.

4. *Helping Each Other.* The wife should be a “helper comparable to her husband” (Gen 2:18), implying they should both help each other. They should carry these things together:

A. Their work. If she works at home and he works outside, both their work shall be easier. For motivation, let him give attention to all of Proverbs, and her to the last chapter especially.

B. Their crosses. Though newlyweds expect only pleasure in marriage, trouble is bound to come (1Co 7:28). You may face loss of worldly goods, harm to your children, afflictions from both friends and enemies. Spouses must be friends to each other through thick and thin.

C. Their commitment to Christ. Live “as being heirs together of the grace of life” (1Pe 3:7). The highest end of marriage is to promote each other’s eternal happiness. Cooperation here is very important. His knowledge must aid her ignorance, and her zeal his discouragement. When the husband is home, he must instruct and pray with his family and sanctify the Sabbath, but in his absence, she must look to these things.

5. *Being Patient with Each Other.* This duty we owe to all, but especially to our spouse (Eph 4:31-32). There are many temptations in marriage to become impatient! Hot tempers ignite civil wars indoors, and no good ever comes of them. Both need a meek and quiet spirit. Learn to hold your peace to keep the peace. Withdraw until the storm is over. You are not two angels married, but two sinful children of Adam. Wink at lesser faults, and be careful in confronting greater ones. Acknowledge your faults to one another and confess them all to God. Yield to one another rather than to the devil (Eph 4:27).

6. *Saving Each Other.* 1 Corinthians 7:16 insinuates that our great duty is to promote the salvation of our spouse. What good is it to enjoy marriage now and then go to hell together? If you let your spouse be damned, where is your love? Both should inquire into each other’s spiritual state, and use the means appointed to improve it. Chrysostom (c. A.D. 347-407) said, “Let them both go to church and then discuss the sermon together.” If both are Christians already, then they should do what they can to help each other to become thorough saints. Speak often of God and spiritual things. Be fellow-pilgrims to the Celestial City.

7. *Maintaining Regular but Moderate Marital Sex.* “Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb 13:4). Marital sex is designed to remedy impure affections, not excite them. You cannot follow every sexual folly you can imagine with your spouse, just because you are married. Owning wine gives you no permission to get drunk. Be moderate and sensible. For example, you might abstain for a time to give yourselves to prayer (1Co 7:5). Even in marital relations we must show reverence to God and respect for each other. True love does not behave rudely.

8. *Looking Out for Each Other’s Interests in All Things.* Help each other’s health, and be sick together, at least in spirit. One should not be rich while the other suffers want [i.e., lack]. Advance each other’s good reputation. A husband naturally and rightly cares for things that are of the world, how he may please his wife, and the wife does the same (1Co 7:33-34). This brings honor to their faith, comfort to their lives, and a blessing on all they have. They should be bosom friends, laughing and weeping together, with nothing but death separating their interests.

9. *Praying for Each Other.* Peter warns against “their prayers being hindered” (1Pe 3:7), which suggests they should pray for and with each other. “Isaac pleaded with the Lord for his wife, because she was barren” (Gen 25:21). We should pray for everyone, but especially our spouse. The purest love is expressed by earnest prayer, and prayer will preserve love. Seek times for prayer together. Mr. Bolton prayed twice privately, twice with his wife, and twice with his family, each day. Prayer elevates Christian marriage above heathen marriages and the co-habitation of animals.

The Special Duty of a Husband: Love

Love is the foundation of all other duties toward her. Everything flows from this. Without love, every performance of duty toward her seems hard. Tenderness, honor, care, and kindness are merely the beams from the sun of love.

1. The Dimensions of a Godly Husband's Love

The love of a husband to his wife is peculiar to this relation. It is distinct from parental love and from animal lust.

A. The ground of it. You are married to her and God commands husbands to love their wives. This alone will last forever, since she may become less attractive in many ways.

B. The extent of it. You must love both her body and soul. Therefore you should choose a wife that is physically and personality/spiritually attractive to you, or you do her disservice.

C. The degree of it. Above his love for all others, including his parents and children, and certainly above any person outside the family. "Always be enraptured with her love" (Pro 5:19).

D. The duration of it. "Always" (Pro 5:19 quoted above), not only in public but in private, not for a week or month or year, but until death. Your love should daily increase through old age. You had her beauty and strength, so why not her wrinkles and illnesses? Inner loveliness usually increases as outer loveliness decreases. There are many biblical reasons for a husband's perpetual love.

2. The Pattern of a Godly Husband's Love

A. Jesus Christ's love for His Church. "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church" (Eph 5:25). "Nourish and cherish her, just as the Lord does the church" (5:29). While we cannot attain equality with Christ, yet the quality of our love should be the same as His. How, then, does Jesus Christ love His Church?

1) Genuinely, without hypocrisy. His love was so real and intense that He died for the Church.

2) Freely, without conditions before or expectations after. He gave Himself to cleanse His Church, implying she was no beauty beforehand. The husband must draw love from her by his own love. True love is more about bettering the object loved than enriching the subject.

3) Holily, without impurity. Christ loved the Church "that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word" (5:26). This teaches the husband to labor diligently to further the sanctification of his wife.

4) Greatly, without comparison. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (Joh 15:13). This is what Christ did for His Church (5:25).

5) Constantly, without change. Even until He presents her to Himself "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle" (Eph 5:27). Many times has Christ been put off by them, and yet He continues to love them. Husbands should copy His example. No bad behavior on her part is grounds to stop loving her.

6) Actively, without neglect. He “nourishes and cherishes her” (5:29). He must do his utmost to supply all her needs, whether for support, or constant friendship, or a nurse for her illness.

B. The husband’s love for himself. “So husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies” (5:28). “Let each one of you in particular so love his wife as himself” (5:33). Now although this pattern is less than Christ’s love for His Church, yet it is easier to comprehend.

1) Tender. We handle our own sores and griefs more tenderly than anyone else. “No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it” (5:29). Wives are like crystal glasses—easily broken if not tenderly handled. Women are more liable to fears and passions and griefs.

2) Cheerful. No man is so ready to help a man as himself. Best friends sometimes fail you, but you help yourself. So be ready to help your wife. If a cloud arises between you, dissipate it by your love. You will not stay angry with yourself very long. No mediator should be needed.

3. The Demonstration of a Godly Husband’s Love

A. In word

1) He teaches her. “Dwell with her with understanding” (1Pe 3:7). She should “ask her own husband at home” if she wants to learn something, and not speak in the church (1Co 14:35). Woe to the husband that lacks either the will or the skill to teach his wife! He ought to acquire it in either case. Otherwise she [may] curse him forever in hell!

2) He reproves her. “Love will cover a multitude of sins” (1Pe 4:8), so he should overlook many faults. Just as a sword dulls with constant use, so does reproof. Yet true love sometimes requires rebuke, but it must be given with the greatest wisdom and tenderness imaginable, not before strangers, rarely before the family, mainly for sins, seldom for anything else. Give commendation first, and explanation afterward. Reproof should be short, like a very swift and slight slap (of course this is pure simile; a husband should never strike his wife). If the potion is too hot, it does more harm than good. Follow Job’s example, when he said merely, “You speak as one of the foolish women” (Job 2:10). Mild reproof is the most likely to induce her sincere repentance (Pro 25:15).

3) He encourages her. Praise when she does well. This is important because it will help her to realize the sincerity of your love when you must reprove, and make reproofs more convicting.

4) He comforts her. Especially when she is hurting emotionally or physically. Elkanah’s tender reasoning with Hannah brought her to dinner (1Sa 1:8-9). A husband’s kind word is like medicine to his wife. Do not underestimate it.

B. In deed

1) He provides for her. It is mainly the husband’s duty to provide for his wife (Exo 21:10). She should help as she is able. The “honor” a husband must give to his wife as the weaker vessel may well refer to maintenance (1Pe 3:7; cf. Mat 15:6; 1Ti 5:3). He should make provision for her not only while he is living, but also after he is gone, as

Christ did for His Church. If he can, he should also give her “some pittance in her own disposal” (exact quote) so she can exercise charity and encourage servants and children in their duties.

2) He shows great tenderness to her. This is especially shown in his protection of her from dangers, temptation, harm, reproach, contempt, and his sympathy with her in troubles.

3) He is a good example to her. Wives usually follow their husbands to hell or to heaven. His example is a greater influence than he may realize. Solomon calls him “the guide of her youth” (Pro 2:17). Therefore set the pace in piety, seriousness, charity, wisdom, and goodness. She will learn to pray from your prayers. Your life will be a rule or law for hers.

4) He grants her reasonable requests. Remember David granting Bathsheba her request of the throne for her son (1Ki 1:15-31), Isaac granting Rebekah her request of a godly wife for Jacob (Gen 27:46; cf. 28:1), and Jesus Christ granting the reasonable petitions of His Church. A husband should be anticipating her requests, and giving her before she asks. He should seek her advice, as Elkanah and Abraham did (1Sa 1:23; Gen 21:12), and yield to her when she is right.

5) He trusts her in domestic affairs. “The heart of her husband safely trusts her” (Pro 31:11), especially if she has enough sense to guide domestic affairs, as she ought to have. A husband has more important things to do than direct the household servants. She may occasionally consult him so that if things do not turn out well, she may escape blame. But generally, he should move in his sphere outside the home, and she in hers within the home. He should fetch honey, and she should work it in the hive.

6) He exercises authority toward her. The all-wise God invested the first husband with authority (Gen 2:23), and this was not taken away in his fall (Gen 3:16). The light of nature and the gospel require this (Est 1:22; 1Co 11:3). Only proud and ignorant women dispute it. But a husband must use it:

a. wisely. He can only keep authority by a truly spiritual, serious, and manly behavior. It will be hard for her to reverence him if he does not reverence God. If he is light or effeminate, he will lose it.

b. mildly. Remember that though his position is superior, their souls are equal. She is your companion; therefore, you cannot rule her as a king does his subjects, but as the head does its body. Eve was not taken from Adam’s head or foot, but from his side, near his heart. His attitude must be friendly, his language sweet, his commands sparing and respectful, and his reproofs gentle (Col 3:16). Do not think the way to keep a wife under authority is by intimidation. If meekness of wisdom will not prevail with her, then you are undone in this world, and she in the world to come.

The Special Duty of a Wife: Respect

This is her special qualification. If she has all beauty and learning but no respect for her husband, she is not a good wife. Creation suggests it. She was made after the man (1Ti 2:13), from the man (1Co 11:8), and for the man (1Co 11:9). This order was not by

man's doing, but God's. Even after the fall the divine order stands: "He shall rule over you" (Gen 3:16). The New Testament confirms all this (Col 3:18; 1Pe 3:1-6). Even if she is the sweetest thing and her husband the meanest, she still has a duty to respect him. First, she must fix in her heart that her position is inferior to his, and then she will be able to fulfill all respect implies with ease and delight. It is not fitting to set the rib above, or even on the same level with, the head.

1. The Description of a Godly Wife's Respect

A. She highly esteems him. "All wives will honor their husbands, both great and small" (Est 1:20). Ponder the excellence of his person, and value it properly. And if he is not accomplished, then she should consider the excellence of his place as "the image and glory of God" (1Co 11:7). You esteemed him when you chose him as your husband, and you should continue to do so. Remember Michal's disrespect to David and her punishment from God (2Sa 6:16, 23). Her family and neighbors will respect her about as much as she respects her husband, so in honoring him, she honors herself.

B. She dearly loves him. This respect is composed of love, which is also the wife's duty (Ti 2:4). Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel left parents, friends, and country entirely out of love for their husbands. A young woman named Clara Cerventa was married to Valdaura, whose body was so riddled with disease that no one else would touch him. But she dressed his sores with all care, and sold her attire and jewelry to maintain him. Finally he died, and when comforters came to her, she told them she would buy him back again with the loss of her five children if she could. She can beget her husband's love no better way than by her reverence toward him.

C. She diligently pleases him. The word "respect" in Ephesians 5:33 is literally "fear." She should maintain "chaste conduct accompanied by fear" (1Pe 3:2), for one without the other is inadequate. This fear is not servile, but a sincere desire to please and refusal to offend him. "I will do my utmost to please him, though I do not fear his hand, but his frown. I would rather displease the whole world than my husband."

2. The Pattern of a Godly Wife's Respect

A. The Church's respect for Christ. "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (Eph 5:22). "Just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything" (5:24). Her submission is to be like the Church's ideal submission to Christ.

1) In everything. In things great and small, agreeable and disagreeable to her. Only when he requires what God forbids or forbids what God requires is she to refuse submission. She may reason with him in things inconvenient to her, but if he will not be persuaded, and there is no sin in the case, she must submit to him.

2) Free, willing, and cheerful. The service Christians do to the Lord is with goodwill (Eph 6:7). So the wife should submit to her husband as if there were but one will in their two hearts. Leah and Rachel followed Jacob like his shadow (Gen 31:16). Sarah's reverence was sincere, as she called her husband "lord" (Gen 18:12), and this is an example for Christian wives (1Pe 3:6). Therefore, a grudging obedience is unacceptable, and usu-

ally springs from her unmortified pride and self-conceit. Even if he is severe, it is better for you to do your duty, and leave his judgment to God.

B. The body's respect for the head. "For the husband is the head of the wife" (Eph 5:23). All members of the body realize the head is useful for their good. The hand will accept a wound to protect the head. Whatever the head decides to do, the body gets up and follows as long as it can. This is the way the wife should honor her husband, second only to God. It is ludicrous for the head to go one way and the rib another, for a soldier to command his general, or for the moon to pretend superiority over the sun. Only if the husband is insane is this altered. "The man has authority in his house unless he is verbum anomalum; that is, a fool" (Martin Luther, 1483-1546).

3. *The Demonstration of a Godly Wife's Respect*

A. In word—"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Mat 12:34). If she really respects him, it will show in what she says. "On her tongue is the law of kindness" (Pro 31:26; cf. 15:4).

1) She speaks respectfully of him in his absence. No wife is too great or good to imitate Sarah's godly example of giving her husband a title of respect like "lord" (1Pe 3:6). A wicked woman refers to her husband as "the man" (literal Hebrew in Pro 7:19). Would that this was the worst thing wives call their husbands behind their backs!

2) She speaks respectfully to him in his presence. Beware of:

a. interrupting him while he is speaking, or saying ten words to his one. Silence commends a woman's wisdom more than speech. The wise woman uses words sparingly.

b. using disrespectful words or tone. Strive for "a gentle and quiet spirit" (1Pe 3:4). Do not be afraid that this will make your husband worse, but trust in God's wisdom (1Pe 3:1; Pro 25:15). Remember, God hears and will judge you for every idle word (Mat 12:36). Ideally, both the husband and wife should be slow to passion, yet where one must yield, it is most reasonably expected of the wife. No woman gets honor by having the last word. Some women argue that their tongue is their only weapon, but the wise know that their tongue is set on fire by hell (Jam 3:6). See how Rachel spoke rashly to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die" (Gen 30:1), and, as soon as she had two, she died (Gen 35:18)! On the other hand, Abigail behaved prudently with a very bad husband and was raised to honor. If respect will not prevail with him, anger never can. That is why the husband and wife ought to agree never to shout at one another.

B. In deed—1) She obeys his directions and restraints. Sarah obeyed Abraham, and she is a worthy model (1Pe 3:6). He said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes" (Gen 18:6), and she did it promptly. The wife is bound in conscience to obey her husband in everything that is not contrary to the revealed will of God, and even in this case, she should refuse respectfully. For example, she cannot consent to omit Bible reading, prayer, or sanctifying the Lord's Day, although he command it ever so sternly. The house is her proper place; she is its beauty; there is her business and safety. Only urgent necessity should call her abroad. The prostitute's feet did not abide at her house (Pro 7:11). She must live where her husband judges best. Wives are to "love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers ['keepers

at home,' KJV; Greek, *oikouros*, meaning caring for the house, working at home, keeping at home, and taking care of household affairs, Strong's Concordance], good, obedient to their own husbands" (Ti 2:4-5).

2) She asks his counsel and hears his reproofs. Rebekah would not send Jacob to her brother Laban without consulting Isaac (Gen 27:46). Sarah would not discard Hagar the servant without consulting Abraham (Gen 21:10). The Shunnamite woman would not receive a prophet into the house without advising her husband (2Ki 4:10). Her hardest task is in hearing a reproof lovingly and thankfully, especially if she has a proud and contentious spirit. But she should remember she has her faults, and no one can see them better than her husband. So to answer him harshly for reproof shows great ingratitude. If she really respects him, this will be a much easier pill to swallow.

3) She maintains a respectful and cheerful attitude at all times. She should not indulge irritability or gloom when he is happy, nor be giddy when he is sad. She should try her best to make him delight in her. Let her express contentedness in her goods and position, and a sweet disposition so he will enjoy being at home with her. Let her study how he likes his meals, his clothes, and his lodging, and conform to his pleasure, because even in these small things many sharp arguments may arise. She must never let her familiarity with him breed contempt. His love must not make her forget her duty, but rather increase her efforts. His fondness must not decrease her respect for him. It is better to obey a wise man than a fool. Most husbands are liable to reform if their wives respect them properly. Likewise, most wives can be won to respect by their husbands' wisdom and affection.

Some will disregard all this counsel with the excuse that none can attain it, but this mocks God. He will punish all such. If His vengeance does not meet you in this life, as it often does the rebellious, then it will in another. A true Christian is marked by a fundamental submission to biblical counsel; without this, you are mere hypocrites.

How to Accomplish These Duties

1. *Keep Yourself Pure before Marriage.* This will help you in the duties of marriage later. Everyone should "possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor" (1Th 4:4). The fornicator before marriage continues his sin in marriage. Beware of lust's first beginning, and flee it like poison. Keep your heart filled with the things of God and your body busy about your duties. The greatest fires begin with a spark. Momentary pleasure that precedes eternal torment is utter folly. If you have sinned in this way, cleanse your hearts and hands with Christ's blood by confession to God with fasting and prayer for His forgiveness and strength against future temptation. Get a taste of the more ravishing delights of God's favor and promises, pardon of sin, and assurance of life and immortality. Once you have drunk from the pure spring, you will not prefer the muddy stream.

2. *Choose Your Spouse Carefully.* Now that you know how difficult godly marriage is, you should be praying that He would guide you into it. Do not first love, and then consider. First consider, and then love. Let their soul be your main concern, not their looks or money. Why espouse a perpetual cross for some passing profit or delight? Marry only

a Christian, the more godly the better. Consider also their personality. Speak honestly to one another about your faults and liabilities before marrying. If someone sold you a sick animal as a healthy one, you would feel cheated. How much worse is it when someone pretends to be better than they really are to secure marriage to one they profess to love!

3. *Study Biblical Marriage Duties before You Have Them.* Being a godly spouse is such a big challenge that you must prepare for it well beforehand. It is no wonder that so many marriages fail! Too often the husband does not know how to rule, the wife does not know how to obey. They are both ignorant, conceited, and miserable. Therefore, parents ought to teach their children about the duties of marriage. Otherwise families, which should be the nurseries of the church, prove to be hotbeds of disorder and immorality. Read not only Scripture, but good books like Gouge's *Of Domestical Duties*...¹

4. *Resolve to Obey God without Any Reservation.* Until you are born again and made holy in your heart and conduct, you cannot please God or be a complete blessing to your spouse. You can only live together as civil pagans. The husband that truly fears God cannot remain bitter against his wife. A Bible placed between you will eliminate many differences, comfort many distresses, and guide you in many confounding circumstances. Remember, God's commands have the highest reason and so obedience has the greatest sweetness. Keep the Golden Rule in your marriage. Righteousness abroad will not excuse wickedness at home. When you each focus on your own duties, you will be blessed.

5. *Get and Maintain True Affection for Your Spouse.* Give no place to jealousy. Do not give ear to backbiters and gossips. Jealousy often develops where true affection was lacking from the start.

6. *Pray for Spiritual Graces.*

A. Wisdom. A lack of wisdom causes many troubles in marriage. We need much wisdom to rule as husbands, and to submit as wives.

B. Humility. This keeps the husband from becoming a tyrant, and the wife in ready subjection to her husband. "By pride comes nothing but strife" (Pro 13:10). A proud person could not agree with an angel; the humble will agree with anybody. Humility will also promote contentment. The humble husband and wife will say, "My spouse is far too good for such a sinful person as myself. I don't deserve such a wonderful partner. That was a sharp reproof, but it was nothing compared to hell, which is what I deserve." Truly humble people are easy companions.

C. Uprightness. An upright heart is needed to keep these commandments of God. An upright heart will choose the safest course, even if it is the hardest. It will suffer the worst injury rather than cause the least. It will watch against the beginnings of sin, which produce marriage's worst troubles. The upright husband and wife will strive each to do their own duty, and will be most severe against their own failures.

Abridgment and paraphrase by D. Scott Meadows, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Exeter, New Hampshire; booklet available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

¹ Modern choices include Reformation Heritage Press' reprint of Gouge's *Domestic Duties* and Douglas Wilson's *Reforming Marriage*, published by Canon Press.

Richard Steele (1629-1692): Puritan preacher and author; remembered as “a very valuable...man...and an excellent preacher.” Born in Cheshire, England.

FAMILY DUTY

John Bunyan (1628-1688)

A Father's Duty to the Family in General

He that is the master of a family has, under that relation, a work to do for God: the right governing of his own family. And his work is twofold. First, touching the *spiritual state of it*. Second, touching the *outward state of it*.

First, as touching the *spiritual state of his family*, he should be very diligent and circumspect, doing his utmost endeavor both to increase faith where it is begun, and to begin it where it is not. For this reason, he should diligently and frequently lay before his household such things of God out of His Word, as are suitable for each particular. And let no man question his rule in the Word of God for such a practice. If the thing itself were but of good report, and a thing tending to civil honesty, it is within the compass and bounds even of nature itself, and should be done; much more [so] things of a higher nature. Besides, the apostle exhorts us to whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, pure, lovely, and of good report, to think of them, that is, to be mindful to do them (Phi 4:8). But to be conversant in this godly exercise in our family is very worthy of praise, and is very fitting to all Christians. This is one of the things for which God so highly commended His servant Abraham, and that with which his heart was so much affected by. I know Abraham, says God, "I know him" to be a good man indeed, for "he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD" (Gen 18:19). This was a thing also that good Joshua designed should be his practice as long as he had a breathing time in this world. "As for me," says he, I "and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Jos 24:15).

Further, we find also in the New Testament that they are looked upon as Christians of an inferior rank that have not a due regard to this duty; yes, so inferior as not fit to be chosen to any office in the church of God. A [bishop or] pastor must be one that rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? The deacon also, says he, must "be the husband of one wife, ruling their children, and their own house well" (1Ti 3). Notice, the apostle seems to lay down this much, that a man that governs his family well, has one qualification belonging to a pastor or deacon in the house of God, for he that knows not how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God? This, considered, gives us light into the work of the master of a family, touching the governing of his house.

1. A pastor must be sound and incorrupt in his doctrine; and, indeed, so must the master of a family (Ti 1:9; Eph 6:4).

2. A pastor should be apt to teach, to reprove, and to exhort; and so should the master of a family (1Ti 3:2; Deu 6:7).

3. A pastor must himself be exemplary in faith and holiness; and so also should the master of a family (1Ti 3:2-4; 4:12). "I," says David, "will behave myself in a perfect way; I will walk in [or before] my house with a perfect heart" (Psa 101:2).

4. The pastor is for getting the church together; and when they are so come together, then to pray among them, and to preach unto them. This is also commendable in Christian masters of families.

Objection: But my family is ungodly and unruly touching all that is good. What should I do?

Answer: 1. Though this be true, yet you must rule them, and not them you! You are set over them of God, and you are to use the authority which God has given you, both to rebuke their vice, and to show them the evil of their rebelling against the Lord. Eli did this, though not enough; and so did David (1Sa 2:24-25; 1Ch 28:9). Also, you must tell them how sad your state was when you were in their condition, and so labor to recover them out of the snare of the devil (Mar 5:19).

2. You should also labor to draw them out to God's public worship, if perhaps God may convert their souls. Said Jacob to his household, and to all that were about him, "Let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress" (Gen 35:3). Hannah would carry Samuel to Shiloh that he might abide with God forever (1Sa 1:22). Indeed, a soul rightly touched will labor to draw not only their families, but a whole city after Jesus Christ (Joh 4:28-30).

3. If they are obstinate and will not go with you, then bring godly and sound men to your house, and there let the Word of God be preached, when you have, as Cornelius, gathered your family and friends together (Act 10).

You know that the jailor, Lydia, Crispus, Gaius, Stephanus, and others, had not only themselves, but their families made gracious by the word preached, and that some of them, if not all, by the word preached in their houses (Act 16:14-34; 18:7-8; 1Co 1:16). And this, for all I know, might be one reason among many, why the apostles taught in their day not only publicly, but from house to house; I say, that they might, if possible, bring in those in some family, which yet remained unconverted and in their sins (Act 10:24; 20:20-21). For some, you know how usual it was in the day of Christ to invite Him to their houses if they had any afflicted, that either would not or could not come unto Him (Luk 7:2-3; 8:41). If this be the way with those that have outward diseases in their families, how much more, then, where there are souls that have need of Christ to save them from death and eternal damnation!

4. Take heed that you do not neglect family duties among them yourself—as, reading the Word and prayer; if you have one in your family that is gracious, take encouragement. If you are alone, yet know that you have both liberty to go to God through Christ, and also are at that time in a capacity of having the universal Church join with you for the whole number of those that shall be saved.

5. Do not allow any ungodly, profane, or heretical books or discourse in your house. "Evil communications corrupt good manners" (1Co 15:33). I mean such profane or heretical books, etc., as either tend to provoke to looseness of life, or such as do oppose the

fundamentals of the gospel. I know that Christians must be allowed their liberty as to things indifferent; but for those things that strike either at faith or holiness, they should be abandoned by all Christians, and especially by the pastors of churches and masters of families. This practice was shown by Jacob's commanding his house, and all that were with him, to put away the strange gods from among them, and to change their garments (Gen 35:2). All those in the Acts set a good example for this, who took their curious books and burned them before all men, though they were worth fifty thousand pieces of silver (Act 19:18-19). The neglect of this fourth particular has occasioned ruin in many families, both among children and servants. It is easier for vain talkers and their deceivable works to subvert whole households than many are aware of (Ti 1:10-11). We have touched the spiritual state of your household. And now to its outward state.

Second, touching the *outward state of your family*, you are to consider these three things.

1. That it lies upon you to care for them that they have a convenient livelihood. "If any man provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1Ti 5:8). But notice, when the Word says you are to provide for your house, it gives you no license to distracting carefulness; neither does it allow you to strive to grasp the world in your heart, or bank account, nor to take care for years or days to come, but so to provide for them that they may have food and raiment; and if either they or you are not content with that, you launch out beyond the rule of God (1Ti 6:8; Mat 6:34). This is to labor that you may have the means "to maintain good works for necessary uses" (Ti 3:14). And never object that unless you reach farther, it will never do; for that is but unbelief. The Word says that God feeds ravens, cares for sparrows, and clothes the grass; in which three, to feed, clothe, and care for, is as much as heart can wish (Luk 12:22-28).

2. Therefore, though you should provide for your family, yet let all your labor be mixed with moderation; "Let your moderation be known unto all men" (Phi 4:5). Take heed of driving so hard after this world as to hinder yourself and family from those duties towards God, which you are by grace obliged to—as private prayer, reading the Scriptures, and Christian conference. It is a base thing for men so to spend themselves and families after this world, as that they disengage their heart to God's worship.

Christians, "The time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1Co 7:29-31). Many Christians live and do in this world as if religion were but a by-business, and this world the one thing necessary—when, indeed, all the things of this world are but things by the by, and religion only the one thing needful (Luk 10:40-42).

3. If you would be such a master of a family as is fitting for you, you must see that there is that Christian harmony among those under you, as is fitting for a house where one rules that fears God.

A. You must see that your children and servants are under subjection to the Word of God; for though it is of God only to rule the heart, yet He expects that you should rule their outward man; which if you do not, He may in a short time cut off all your stock [even every male] (1Sa 3:11-14). See therefore that you keep them temperate in all things—in apparel, in language, that they be not gluttons, nor drunkards; not suffering either your children vainly to domineer over your servants, or they again to carry themselves foolishly towards each other.

B. Learn to distinguish between that injury in your family that is done to you, and that which is done to God. And though you should be very zealous for the Lord, and bear nothing that is open transgression to Him, yet here will be your wisdom: to pass by personal injuries, and to bury them in oblivion, for love “shall cover the multitude of sins” (1Pe 4:8). Be not, then, like those that will rage and stare like madmen when they are injured; but either laugh, or at least not soberly rebuke and warn, when God is dishonored.

Rule thy own house well, having thy children—with others in thy family—in subjection, with all gravity (1Ti 3:4). Solomon was so excellent sometimes this way that he made the eyes of his beholders to dazzle (2Ch 9:3-4). But to break off from this general, and to come to particulars.

Do you have a wife? You must consider how you should behave yourself in that relation: and to do this right, you must consider the condition of your wife, whether she is one that indeed believes or not. *First*, if she believes, then,

1. You are engaged to bless God for her: “For her price is far above rubies, and she is the gift of God unto thee, and is for thy adorning and glory” (Pro 12:4; 31:10; 1Co 11:7). “Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised” (Pro 31:30).

2. You should love her under a double consideration:

A. As she is your flesh and your bone: “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh” (Eph 5:29).

B. As she is together with you an heir of the grace of life (1Pe 3:7). This, I say, should engage you to love her with Christian love; to love her as believing you both are dearly beloved of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and as those that must be together with Him in eternal happiness.

3. You should carry yourself to and before her as does Christ to and before His Church; as says the apostle: So should men love their wives, “even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph 5:25). When husbands behave themselves like husbands indeed, then will they be not only husbands, but such an ordinance of God to the wife as will preach to her the carriage of Christ to His spouse. There is a sweet scent wrapped up in the relations of husbands and wives that believe (Eph 4:32); the wife, I say, signifying the Church, and the husband the head and Savior thereof, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Savior of the body” (Eph 5:23).

This is one of God’s chief ends in instituting marriage, that Christ and His Church, under a figure, might be wherever there is a couple that believe through grace. There-

fore, that husband that carries himself indiscreetly towards his wife, he does not only behave himself contrary to the rule, but also makes his wife lose the benefit of such an ordinance, and crosses the mystery of his relation.

Therefore, I say, "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church" (Eph 5:8, 29). Christ laid out His life for His Church, covers her infirmities, communicates to her His wisdom, protects her, and helps her in her employments in this world; and so should men do for their wives. Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter had the art of thus doing, as you may see in the book of The Song of Solomon. Therefore bear with their weaknesses, help their infirmities, and honor them as the weaker vessels, and as being of a frailer constitution (1Pe 3:7).

In a word, be such a husband to your believing wife that she may say, God has not only given me a husband, but such a husband as preaches to me everyday the behavior of Christ to His Church.

Second, if your wife be unbelieving or carnal, then you have also a duty lying before you, which you are engaged to perform under a double engagement: 1. She lies liable every moment to eternal damnation. 2. That She is your wife that is in this evil case.

Oh! how little sense of the worth of souls is there in the heart of some husbands, as is manifest by their unchristian behavior toward and before their wives! Now, to qualify you for a behavior suitable,

1. Labor seriously after a sense of her miserable state, that your heart may yearn towards her soul.

2. Beware that she take no occasion from any unseemly behavior of yours to proceed in evil. And here you have need to double your diligence, for she lies in your bosom, and therefore is capable of spying the least miscarriage in you.

3. If she behaves herself unseemly and unruly, as she is subject to do being Christless and graceless, then labor to overcome her evil with your goodness, her adversity with your patience and meekness. It is a shame for you, who have another principle, to do as she.

4. Take fit opportunities to convince her. Observe her disposition, and when she is most likely to bear, then speak to her very heart.

5. When you speak, speak to purpose. It is not necessary for many words, provided they be pertinent. Job in a few words answers his wife, and takes her off from her foolish talking: "Thou speakest," saith he, "as one of the foolish women. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10).

6. Let all be done without bitterness or the least appearance of anger: "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if...peradventure they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2Ti 2:25-26). "And how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" (1Co 7:16).

The Duty of Wives

But passing the master of the family, I will speak a word or two to those that are under him.

And, first, to the wife: The wife is bound by the law to her husband, so long as her husband lives (Rom 7:2). Therefore she also has her work and place in the family, as well as the rest.

Now there are these things considered in the carriage of a wife toward her husband, which she should conscientiously observe.

First, that she look upon him as her head and lord. “The head of the woman is the man” (1Co 11:3). And so Sarah called Abraham lord (1Pe 3:6).

Second, she should therefore be subject to him, as is fit in the Lord. The apostle says, “That the wife should submit herself to her husband, as to the Lord” (1Pe 3:1; Col 3:18; Eph 5:22). I told you before, that if the husband does walk towards his wife as is fitting to him, he will therein be such an ordinance of God to her, besides the relation of a husband, that will preach to her the behavior of Christ to His Church. And now I say also, that the wife, if she walk with her husband as is fitting to her, she shall preach the obedience of the Church to her husband. “Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything” (Eph 5:24). Now for your performing of this work, you must first shun these evils.

1. The evil of a wandering and a gossiping spirit; this is evil in the church and is evil also in a wife, who is the figure of a church. Christ loves to have His spouse keep at home; that is, to be with Him in the faith and practice of His things, not ranging and meddling with the things of Satan. No more should wives be given to wander and gossip abroad. You know that Proverbs 7:11 says, “She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house.” Wives should be about their own husbands’ business at home; as the apostle says, Let them “be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands.” And why? Because otherwise “the word of God will be blasphemed” (Ti 2:5).

2. Take heed of an idle, talking, or contentious tongue. This also is odious, either in maids or wives, to be like parrots, not bridling their tongues; whereas the wife should know, as I said before, that her husband is her lord and is over her, as Christ is over the Church. Do you think it is seemly for the Church to parrot it against her Husband? Is she not to be silent before Him, and to look to His laws, rather than her own fictions? Why so, says the apostle, should the wife so carry it towards her husband? “Let the woman,” says Paul, “learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (1Ti 2:11-12). It is an unseemly thing to see a woman so much as once in all her lifetime to offer to overtop her husband; she should in everything be in subjection to him, and to do all she does as having her warrant, license, and authority from him. And indeed here is her glory, even to be under him, as the Church is under Christ: Now “she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue *is* the law of kindness” (Pro 31:26).

3. Do not wear immodest apparel, or walk in a seductive way; this will be evil both abroad and at home; abroad, it will not only give ill example, but also tend to tempt to

lust and lasciviousness; and at home it will give an offence to a godly husband, and be infecting to ungodly children, etc. Therefore, as says the apostle, Let women's apparel be modest, as becomes women professing godliness, with good works, "not with brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" (1Ti 2:9-10). And as it is said again, "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel: But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands" (1Pe 3:3-5).

But yet, do not think that by the subjection I have here mentioned, that I do intend women should be their husbands' slaves. Women are their husbands' yoke-fellows, their flesh and their bones; and he is not a man that hates his own flesh, or that is bitter against it (Eph 5:29). Wherefore, let every man "love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence her husband" (Eph 5:33). The wife is master next to her husband, and is to rule all in his absence; yes, in his presence she is to guide the house, to bring up the children, provided she does it as the adversary has no occasion to speak reproachfully (1Ti 5:10, 13). "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. A gracious woman retaineth honour," and guides her affairs with discretion (Pro 31:10; 11:16; 12:4).

Objection: But my husband is an unbeliever; what shall I do?

Answer: If so, then what I have said before lies upon you with an engagement so much the stronger. For, 1. Your husband being in this condition, he will be watchful to take your slips and infirmities, to throw them as dirt in the face of God and your Savior. 2. He will be apt to make the worst of every one of your words, actions, and gestures. 3. And all this does tend to the possessing his heart with more hardness, prejudice, and opposition to his own salvation; therefore, as Peter says, "ye wives, *be* in subjection to your husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they may also without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear" (1Pe 3:1-2). Your husband's salvation or damnation lies much in your good behavior before him; therefore, if there is in you any fear of God, or love to your husband, seek, by behavior full of meekness, modesty, holiness, and a humbleness before him, to win him to the love of his own salvation; and by doing this, how "knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save *thy* husband?" (1Co 7:16).

Objection: But my husband is not only an unbeliever, but one very contentious, peevish, and testy, yes, so contentious, etc., that I know not how to speak to him or behave myself before him.

Answer: Indeed there are some wives in great slavery by reason of their ungodly husbands; and as such should be pitied and prayed for; so they should be so much the more watchful and circumspect in all their ways.

1. Therefore, be very faithful to him in all the things of this life.

2. Bear with patience his unruly and unconverted behavior; you are alive, he is dead; you are principled with grace, he with sin. Now, then, seeing grace is stronger than sin

and virtue than vice, be not overcome with his vileness, but overcome that with your virtues (Rom 12:21). It is a shame for those that are gracious to be as lavishing in their words, etc., as those that are graceless: They that are “slow to wrath are of great understanding; but *they that are* hasty of spirit, exalteth folly” (Pro 14:29).

3. Your wisdom, therefore, if at any time you have a desire to speak to your husband for his conviction concerning anything, either good or evil, it is to observe convenient times and seasons: There is “a time to keep silence, and a time to speak” (Ecc 3:7). Now for the right timing of your intentions,

A. Consider his disposition; and take him when he is farthest off of those filthy passions that are your afflictions. Abigail would not speak a word to her churlish husband till his wine was gone from him, and he in a sober temper (1Sa 25:36-37). Not heeding this observation is the cause why so much is spoken, and so little effected.

B. Take him at those times when he has his heart taken with you, and when he shows tokens of love and delight in you. Thus did Esther with the king her husband, and prevailed (Est 5:3, 6; 7:1-2).

C. Observe when convictions seize his conscience, and then follow them with sound and grave sayings of the Scriptures. Somewhat like to this dealt Manoah’s wife with her husband (Jdg 13:22-23). Yet then,

(1) Let your words be few.

(2) And none of them savoring of a lording it over him; but speak still as to your head and lord, by way of entreaty and beseeching.

(3) And that in such a spirit of sympathy, and a heart of affection after his good, that the manner of your speech and behavior in speaking may be to him an argument that you speak in love, as being sensible of his misery, and inflamed in your soul with desire after his conversion.

(4) And follow your words and behavior with prayers to God for his soul.

(5) Still keeping yourself in a holy, chaste, and modest behavior before him.

Objection: But my husband is stupid, a fool, and one that has not wit enough to follow his outward employment in the world.

Answer:

1. Though all this be true, yet you must know he is your head, your lord, and your husband.

2. Therefore, you must take heed of desiring to usurp authority over him. He was not made for you—that is, for you to have dominion over him—but to be your husband, and to rule over you (1Ti 2:12; 1Co 11:3, 8).

3. Therefore, though in truth you may have more discretion than he, yet you should know that you, and all that is yours, are to be used as under your husband—even “every thing” (Eph 5:24).

Take heed, therefore, that what you do goes not in your name, but his; not to your exaltation, but his; doing all things so that by your dexterity and prudence, not one of your husband’s weaknesses is discovered to others by you: “A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed, is as rottenness in his bones.” For then, as

the wise man says, “she will do him good and not evil, all the days of her life” (Pro 12:4; 31:12).

4. Therefore act, and do still, as being under the power and authority of your husband.

Now touching your behavior toward your children and servants. You are a parent and a mistress, and so you should demean yourself. And besides, seeing [that] the believing woman is a figure of the Church, she should, as the Church, nourish and instruct her children and servants as the Church, that she may answer in that particular also; and truly, the wife being always at home, she has great advantage that way; therefore do it, and the Lord prosper your proceeding.

Duty of Parents to Children

If you are a parent, a father or a mother, then you are to consider your calling under this relation.

Your children have souls, and they must be born of God as well as of you, or they perish. And know also that unless you be very circumspect in your behavior to and before them, they may perish through you: the thoughts of which should provoke you both to *instruct*, and also to *correct* them.

First, to *instruct* them as the Scripture says, and to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”; and to do this diligently, “when thou sittest in thine house...when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Eph 6:4; Deu 6:7).

Now to do this to purpose:

1. Do it in terms and words easy to be understood: do not use high expressions; they will drown your children. Thus God spoke to His children (Hos 12:10), and Paul to his (1Co 3:2).

2. Take heed of filling their heads with whimsies and unprofitable notions, for this will sooner teach them to be bold and proud, than sober and humble. Open, therefore, to them the state of man by nature; discourse with them of sin, death, and hell; of a crucified Savior, and the promise of life through faith: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Pro 22:6).

3. There must be much gentleness and patience in all your instructions, “lest they be discouraged” (Col 3:21). And,

4. Labor to convince them by a conversation answerable, that the things of which you instruct them are not fables, but realities; yes, and realities so far above what can be enjoyed here, that all things, were they a thousand times better than they are, are not worthy to be compared with the glory and worthiness of these things.

Isaac was so holy before his children that when Jacob remembered God, he remembered that He was “the Fear of his father Isaac” (Gen 31:53).

Ah! when children can think of their parents, and bless God for that instruction and good they have received from them, this is not only profitable for children, but honorable and comfortable to parents: “The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise *child* shall have joy of him” (Pro 23:24-25).

Second, the duty of *correction*.

1. See if fair words will win them from evil. This is God's way with His children (Jer 25:4-5).

2. Let those words you speak to them in your reproof be both sober, few, and pertinent, adding always some suitable sentence of the Scripture therewith; if they lie, then such as Revelation 21:8, 27. If they refuse to hear the Word, such as 2 Chronicles 25:14-16.

3. Look to them, that they be not companions with those that are rude and ungodly; show with soberness a continual dislike of their naughtiness, often crying out to them as God did of old unto His, "Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate" (Jer 44:4).

4. Let all this be mixed with such love, pity, and compunction of spirit, that if possible they may be convinced you dislike not their persons, but their sins. This is God's way (Psa 99:8).

5. Be often endeavoring to fasten on their consciences the day of their death, and judgment to come. Thus also God deals with His (Deu 32:29).

6. If you are driven to the rod, then strike advisedly in cool blood, and soberly show them, (a.) their fault; (b.) how much it is against your heart to deal with them in this way; (c.) that what you do, you do in conscience to God, and love to their souls; (d.) and tell them, that if fair means would have done, none of this severity should have been. This, I have proved it, will be a means to afflict their hearts as well as their bodies; and it being the way that God deals with His, it is the most likely to accomplish its end.

7. Follow all this with prayer to God for them, and leave the issue to Him: "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Pro 22:15).

Lastly, observe these *cautions*.

1. Take heed that the misdeeds for which you correct your children be not learned by them from you. Many children learn that wickedness of their parents for which they beat and chastise them.

2. Take heed that you smile not upon them to encourage them in small faults, for your behavior toward them will be an encouragement to them to commit greater.

3. Take heed that you use not unsavory and unseemly words in your chastising of them, as insulting, name-calling, and the like: this is devilish.

4. Take heed that you do not accustom them to many chiding words and threatenings, mixed with lightness and laughter; this will harden. Speak not much, nor often, but pertinent to them with all sobriety.

Duties of Children to Parents

There lies also a duty upon children to their parents, which they are bound both by the law of God and nature conscientiously to observe: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." And again, "Children, obey *your* parents in all things; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord" (Eph 6:1; Col 3:20).

General duties

There are these general things in which children should show forth that honor that is due to their parents from them.

First, they should always count them better than themselves. I observe a vile spirit among some children, and that is, they are apt to look down upon their parents, and to have slighting and scornful thoughts of them. This is worse than heathenish; such an one has got just the heart of a dog or a beast, that will bite those that produced them, and her that brought them forth.

Objection: But my father, etc., is now poor, and I am rich, and it will be a disparagement, or at least a hinderance to me, to show that respect to him as otherwise I might.

Answer: I tell you, you argue like an atheist and a beast, and stand in this full flat against the Son of God (Mar 7:9-13). Must a gift, and a little of the glory of the butterfly, make you that you should not do for, and give honor to, your father and mother? “A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother” (Pro 15:20). Though your parents be never so low, and you yourself never so high, yet he is your father, and she your mother; and they must be in your eye in great esteem: “The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it” (Pro 30:17).

Second, you should show honor to your parents by a willingness to help them with such necessaries and accommodations that they need. “If any have children or nephews, let them learn to show piety at home, and to requite their parents:” says Paul, “for that is good and acceptable before God” (1Ti 5:4). And this rule Joseph observed to his poor father, though he himself was next [to] the king in Egypt (Gen 47:12; 41:39-44).

But notice, let them “requite their parents.” There are three things for which, as long as you live, you will be a debtor to your parents.

1. For your being in this world. They are they from whom, immediately under God, you did receive it.

2. For their care to preserve you when you were helpless, and could neither care for, nor regard yourself.

3. For the pains they have taken with you to bring you up. Until you have children of your own, you will not be sensible of the pains, watchings, fears, sorrow, and affliction, that they have gone under to bring you up; and when you know it, you will not easily yield that you have recompensed them for their favor to you. How often have they sustained you in your hunger, clothed your nakedness? What care have they taken that you might have the means to live and do well when they were dead and gone? They possibly have spared it from their own belly and back for you, and have also impoverished themselves, that you might live like a man. All these things should duly, and like a man, be considered by you; and care should be taken on your part to repay them. The Scripture says so, reason says so, and there be none but dogs and beasts that deny it. It is the duty of parents to lay up for their children; and the duty of children to repay their parents.

Third, therefore show, by all humble and son-like behavior, that you do to this day, with your heart, remember the love of your parents.

Thus much for obedience to parents in general.

Duties if you are not saved

Again, if your parents be godly, and you wicked, as you are if you have not a second work or birth from God upon you, then you are to consider that you are more strongly engaged to respect and honor your parents, not now only as a father in the flesh, but as godly parents; your father and mother are now made of God your teachers and instructors in the way of righteousness. Therefore, to allude to that of Solomon, “My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother; bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck” (Pro 6:20-21).

Now, to provoke you to consider this,

1. That this has been the practice always of those that are and have been obedient children; yes, of Christ Himself to Joseph and Mary, though He Himself was God blessed for ever (Luk 2:51).

2. You have also the severe judgments of God upon those that have been disobedient, to awe you. As, (1.) Ishmael, for but mocking at one good act of his father and mother, was both thrust out of his father’s inheritance and the kingdom of heaven, and that with God’s approbation (Gen 21:9-14; Gal 4:30). (2.) Hophni and Phinehas, for refusing the good counsel of their father, provoked the great God to be their enemy: “They hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them” (1Sa 2:23-25). (3.) Absalom was hanged, as I may say, by God Himself, for rebelling against his father (2Sa 18:9).

Besides, little do you know how heart-aching a consideration it is to your parents, when they do but *suppose* you may be damned! How many prayers, sighs, and tears, are there wrung from their hearts upon this account? Every misdeed of yours goes to their heart, for fear God should take an occasion by it to shut you up in hardness for ever. How did Abraham groan for Ishmael? “O,” said he to God, “that Ishmael might live before thee!” (Gen 17:18). How were Isaac and Rebecca grieved for the misbehavior of Esau? (Gen 26:34-35). And how bitterly did David mourn for his son, who died in his wickedness? (2Sa 18:32-33).

Lastly, and can any imagine, but that all these prayers, sighs, etc., of your godly parents, will be to you the increase of your torments in hell, if you die in your sins notwithstanding?

Duties if you are saved

Again, if your parents and you also be godly, how happy a thing is this? How should you rejoice that the same faith should dwell both in your parents and you? Your conversion, possibly, is the fruit of your parents’ groans and prayers for your soul; and they cannot choose but [to] rejoice; rejoice with them. It is true in the salvation of a natural son, which is mentioned in the parable: “This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry” (Luk 15:24). Let, therefore, the consideration of this—that your parents have grace, as well as you—engage your heart so much the more to honor, reverence, and obey them.

You are better able now to consider the pains and care that your friends have been at, both for your body and soul; therefore strive to repay them. You have strength to answer in some measure the command; therefore do not neglect it. It is a double sin in a gracious son not to remember the commandment, yes, the first commandment with promise (Eph 6:1-2). Take heed of giving your sweet parents one snappish word, or behaving in any way unseemly towards them. Love them because they are your parents, because they are godly, and because you must be in glory with them.

Duties if your parents are not saved

Again, if you be godly and your parents wicked, as often it sadly falls out, then,

1. Let your heart yearn towards them; it is your parents that are going to hell!

2. As I said before to the wife, touching her unbelieving husband, so now I say to you, Take heed of a parroting tongue: speak to them wisely, meekly, and humbly; do for them faithfully without repining; and bear with all child-like modesty their reproaches, their railing, and evil speaking. Watch [for] fit opportunities to lay their condition before them. O! how happy a thing would it be, if God should use a child to bring his father to the faith! Then indeed might the father say, "With the fruit of my own body has God converted my soul." The Lord, if it be His will, convert our poor parents, that they, with us, may be the children of God.

From the booklet *Christian Behavior*. The text has been modernized for easier reading; booklet available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

John Bunyan (1628-1688): English minister, preacher, and one of the most influential writers of the 17th century. Beloved author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Holy War*, *The Acceptable Sacrifice*, and numerous others. Born at Elstow near Bedford, England.



"Some of us owe a great deal to our [families], and all of you have reason to thank God that you are the son of such an one, or that you are the father of such an one, or the sister of such an one, or the brother of such an one. There is a special mercy, probably, in your domestic position; and if there is, do not cease to praise God that He has given you to be associated in life with those who are associated with Him! May our children be His children! May our friends be His friends! May our brothers be our Brothers in Christ!" —*C. H. Spurgeon*

THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING AND THE CHILDREN

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

“Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians, and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD’s passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.”—Exodus 12:21-27

THE Paschal lamb was a special type of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are not left to gather this from the general fact that all the ancient sacrifices were shadows of the one true and real substance; but we are assured in the New Testament that “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1Co 5:7). As the Paschal lamb must be without blemish, so was our Lord, and its killing and roasting with fire were typical of His death and sufferings. Even as to time, our Lord fulfilled the type, for the time of His crucifixion was the Passover. As the impression answers to the seal, so does the sacrifice of our Lord correspond with all the items of the Passover ceremonial. We see Him “drawn out” from among men, and led as a lamb to the slaughter; we see His blood shed and sprinkled; we see Him roasted in the fire of anguish; by faith we eat of Him, and flavour the feast with the bitter herbs of penitence. We see Jesus and salvation where the carnal eye sees only a slaughtered lamb and a people saved from death.

The Spirit of God in the Passover ceremonial lays special emphasis upon *the sprinkling of the blood*. That which men so greatly oppose, He as diligently sets forth as the head and front of revelation. The blood of the chosen lamb was caught in a basin and not spilled upon the ground in wastefulness; for the blood of Christ is most precious. Into this bowl of blood a bunch of hyssop was dipped. The sprays of that little shrub would hold the crimson drops, so that they could be easily sprinkled. Then the father of the family went outside, and struck with this hyssop the lintel and the two side posts of the door, and so the house was marked with three crimson streaks. No blood was put upon the threshold. Woe unto the man that tramples upon the blood of Christ, and treats it as

an unholy thing! Alas! I fear that many are doing so at this hour, not only among the outside world, but among those who profess and call themselves Christians.

I shall endeavor to bring forward two things. First, *the importance attached to the sprinkled blood*; and, secondly, *the institution connected with it*, namely, that the children should be instructed in the meaning of sacrifice, so that they also may teach their children, and keep afire the memory of the Lord's great deliverance.

I. The Importance Attached to the Blood of Sacrifice

First, the importance attached to the blood of sacrifice is here made very plain. Pains are taken to make the sacrifice observable, yea, to force it upon the notice of all the people.

I note, first, that *it became and remained the national mark*. If you had traversed the streets of Memphis or Rameses on the night of the Passover, you could have told who were Israelites and who were Egyptians by one conspicuous token. There was no need to listen under the window to hear the speech of the people within the house, nor to wait till any came into the street so that you could observe their attire. This one thing alone would be a sufficient guide: the Israelite had the bloodmark upon his doorway, the Egyptian had it not. Mark you, this is still the great point of difference between the children of God and the children of the wicked one. There are, in truth, but two denominations upon this earth—the church and the world; those who are justified in Christ Jesus, and those who are condemned in their sins. This shall stand for a never-failing sign of the “Israelite indeed”: he has come to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel. He that believeth in the Son of God, as the one accepted sacrifice for sin, hath salvation, and he that believeth not in him will die in his sins. The true Israel are trusting in the sacrifice once offered for sin; it is their rest, their comfort, their hope. As for those who are not trusting in the atoning sacrifice, they have rejected the counsel of God against themselves, and thus have declared their true character and condition. Jesus said, “Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you”; and want of faith in that shedding of blood, without which there is no remission of sin, is the damning mark of one who is a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel. Let us make no question about it: “Who-soever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God.” (See 2Jo 9 in the Revised Version.) He who will not accept the propitiation that God hath set forth must bear his own iniquity. Nothing more just, and yet nothing more terrible, can happen to such a man than that his iniquity should not be purged by sacrifice nor offering forever. I care not what your supposed righteousness may be, nor how you think to commend yourselves to God; if you reject His Son, He will reject you. If you come before God without the atoning blood, you have neither part nor lot in the matter of the covenant inheritance, and you are not numbered among the people of God. The sacrifice is the national mark of the spiritual Israel, and he that hath it not is an alien; he shall have no inheritance among them that are sanctified, neither shall he behold the Lord in glory.

Secondly, as this was the national mark, *it was also the saving token*. That night the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast, and as he flew down the streets of Egypt he

smote high and low, the firstborn of princes and the firstborn of beasts, so that in every house and in every stall there was one dead. Where he saw the blood-mark he entered not to smite; but everywhere else the vengeance of the Lord fell on the rebellious. The words are very remarkable: "The LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you." What holds back the sword? Nothing but the blood-stain on the door. I call your very special attention, however, to the words that are used in the twenty-third verse: "The LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door." What an instructive expression! "When *he* seeth the blood." It is a very comforting thing for you and for me to behold the atonement; for thus we gain peace and enter into rest; but, after all, the grand reason of our salvation is that the Lord Himself looks upon the atonement, and is well pleased for His righteousness' sake. In the thirteenth verse we hear the Lord Himself say: "When I see the blood I will pass over you."

It is not *our* sight of the sprinkled blood that is the basis of salvation, but *God's* sight of it. God's acceptance of Christ is the sure guarantee of the salvation of those who accept His sacrifice. Beloved, when thine eye of faith is dim, when thine eyeballs swim in a flood of tears, when the darkness of sorrow hides much from thy vision, then Jehovah sees the blood of His Son, and spares thee. In the thick darkness, when thou canst not see at all, the Lord God never fails to see in Jesus that with which He is well pleased, and with which His law is honored. He will not suffer the destroyer to come near thee to harm thee, because He sees in Christ that which vindicates His justice and establishes the needful rule of law. The blood is the saving mark.

O my hearer, guilty and self-condemned, if thou wilt now come and trust in Jesus Christ, thy sins, which are many, shall be all forgiven thee, and thou shalt love so much in return, that the whole bent and bias of thy mind shall be turned from sin to gracious obedience.

Note, next, that *the mark of the blood was rendered as conspicuous as possible*. The Israelites, though they ate the Paschal lamb in the quiet of their own families, yet made no secret of the sacrifice. They did not make the distinctive mark upon the wall of some inner chamber, or in some place where they could cover it with hangings, that no man might perceive it; but they smote the upper part of the doorway and the two side posts of the door, so that all who passed by the house must see that it was marked in a peculiar manner, and marked with blood. The Lord's people were not ashamed to have the blood thus put in the forefront of every dwelling; and those that are saved by the great sacrifice are not to treat the doctrine of substitution as a hole-and-corner creed, to be secretly held, but not openly avowed. The death of Jesus in our room and place and stead is not a redemption of which we are ashamed to speak in any place. Call it old-fashioned and out-of-date, our critics may; but we are not ashamed to publish it to the four winds of heaven, and to avow our confidence in it. He that is ashamed of Christ in this generation, of him will Christ be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father, and all His holy angels with Him. There is a theology abroad in the world that admits the death of Christ to a certain

indefinable place in its system, but that place is very much in the rear. I claim for the atonement the front and the center; the Lamb must be in the midst of the throne.

The great sacrifice is the place of gathering for the chosen seed; we meet at the Cross, even as every family in Israel met around the table whereon was placed the lamb, and met within a house that was marked with blood. Instead of looking upon the vicarious sacrifice as placed somewhere in the remote distance, we find in it the center of the Church. Nay, more; it is so much the vital, all-essential center, that to remove it is to tear out the heart of the church. A congregation which has rejected the sacrifice of Christ is not a church, but an assembly of unbelievers. Of the church I may truly say, "The blood is the life thereof." Like the doctrine of justification by faith, the doctrine of a vicarious sacrifice is the article of standing or falling to each church: atonement by the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ means spiritual life, and the rejection of it is the reverse. Wherefore, we must never be ashamed of this all-important truth, but make it as conspicuous as possible. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1Co 1:18).

Further, the sprinkled blood was not only most conspicuous, but *it was made very dear to the people themselves by the fact that they trusted in it in the most implicit manner.* After the doorposts had been smeared, the people went into their houses, and they shut the door, never to open it again till the morning. They were busy inside: there was the roasting of the lamb, the preparing of the bitter herbs, the girding of their loins, the getting ready for their march, and so forth; but this was done without fear of danger, though they knew that the destroyer was abroad. The command of the Lord was, "None of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning." What is going on in the street? You must not go to see. The midnight hour has come. Did you not hear it? Hark, that dreadful cry! Again a piercing shriek! What is it? The anxious mother asks, "What can it be?" "There was a great cry in Egypt." The Israelites must not heed that cry so as to break the divine word that shut them in for a little moment, till the tempest was passed over. Perhaps persons of doubtful mind, during that dread night, may have said, "Something awful is happening. Hear those cries! Listen to the tramping of the people in the streets as they hurry to and fro! It may be there is a conspiracy to slay us at dead of night." "None of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning" was sufficient for all who truly believed. They were safe, and they knew it, so, like the chicks beneath the wings of the hen, they rested in safety. Beloved, let us do the same. Let us honor the precious blood of Christ not only by speaking of it boldly to others, but [also] by a calm and happy trust in it for ourselves. In full assurance let us rest. Do you believe that Jesus died for you? Then be at peace.

We notice, next, that *the Paschal bloodshedding was to be had in perpetual remembrance.* "Ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever." As long as Israel remained a people, they were to keep the Passover; so long as there is a Christian upon earth, the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus must be kept in memory. No progress of years or advance of thought could take away the memory of the Paschal sacrifice from Israel. Truly it was a night to be remembered when the Lord brought out His

people from under the iron yoke of Egypt. It was such a wonderful deliverance—the plagues that preceded it, and the miracle at the Red Sea that followed it—that no event could possibly excel it in interest and glory. Beloved, the death of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be declared and showed by us until He come. No truth can ever be discovered that can put His sacrificial death into the shade. Whatever shall occur, even though He cometh in the clouds of heaven, yet our song shall be forever, “Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” Amid the splendor of His endless reign He shall be “the Lamb in the midst of the throne.” Christ as the sacrifice for sin shall ever be the subject of our hallelujahs: “For thou wast slain.” As for us, we hear the Lord saying to us, “Ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever,” and so will we do. “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,” is our boast and glory. Let others wander where they will, we abide with Him Who bore our sins in His own body on the tree (Heb 13:8; 1Pe 2:24).

Notice next, dear friends, that when the people came into the land where no Egyptian ever entered, they were still to remember the Passover. “It shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.” In the land that flowed with milk and honey, there was still to be the memorial of the sprinkled blood. Our Lord Jesus is not for the first day of our repentance only, but for all the days of our lives: we remember Him as well amid our highest spiritual joys as in our deepest spiritual griefs. The Paschal lamb is for Canaan as well as for Egypt, and the sacrifice for sin is for our full assurance as well as for our trembling hope. You and I will never attain to such a state of grace that we can do without the blood which cleanseth from sin.

Moreover, brethren, I want you to notice carefully that *this sprinkling of the blood was to be an all-pervading memory*. Catch this thought: the children of Israel could not go out of their houses, and they could not come in, without the remembrance of the sprinkled blood. It was over their heads—they must come under it. It was on the right hand and on the left—they must be surrounded by it. They might almost say of it, “Whither shall we go from thy presence?” Whether they looked on their own doors, or on those of their neighbors, there was the same threefold streak, and it was there both by day and by night. Nor was this all; when two of Israel married, and the foundation of a family was laid, there was another memorial. The young husband and wife had the joy of looking upon their firstborn child, and then they called to mind that the Lord had said, “Sanctify to me all the firstborn.” As an Israelite he explained this to his son, and said, “By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: and it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem” (Exo 13:14-15). The commencement of every family that made up the Israelitish nation was thus a time of special remembrance of the sprinkling of the blood.

Brethren, we should view everything in this world *by the light of redemption*, and then we shall view it aright. It makes a wonderful change whether you view providence from

the standpoint of human merit or from the foot of the Cross. We see nothing truly till Jesus is our light. Everything is seen in its reality when you look through the glass, the ruby glass of the atoning sacrifice. Use this telescope of the Cross, and you shall see far and clear: look at sinners through the Cross; look at saints through the Cross; look at sin through the Cross; look at the world's joys and sorrows through the Cross; look at heaven and hell through the Cross. See how conspicuous the blood of the Passover was meant to be, and then learn from all this to make much of the sacrifice of Jesus, yea, to make everything of it, for Christ is all.

Beloved, you now see how everything was done that could well be thought of to bring the blood of the Paschal lamb into a high position in the esteem of the people whom the Lord brought out of Egypt; and you and I must do everything we can think of to bring forward, and keep before men forever the precious doctrine of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. He was made sin for us though He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

II. The Institution Connected with the Passover

And now I will spend a short time in reminding you of the institution that was connected with the remembrance of the Passover. "It shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover."

Inquiry should be excited in the minds of our children. Oh, that we could get them to ask questions about the things of God! Some of them enquire very early, others of them seem diseased with much the same indifference as older folks. With both orders of mind we have to deal. It is well to explain to children the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, for this shows forth the death of Christ in symbol. I regret that children do not oftener see this ordinance. Baptism and the Lord's Supper should be placed in view of the rising generation that they may then ask us, "What mean ye by this?" Now, the Lord's Supper is a perennial gospel sermon, and it turns mainly upon the sacrifice for sin. You may banish the doctrine of the atonement from the pulpit, but it will always live in the church through the Lord's Supper. You cannot explain that broken bread and that cup filled with the fruit of the vine, without reference to our Lord's atoning death. You cannot explain "the communion of the body of Christ" without bringing in, in some form or other, the death of Jesus in our place and stead. Let your little ones, then, see the Lord's Supper, and let them be told most clearly what it sets forth. And if not the Lord's Supper—for that is not the thing itself, but only the shadow of the glorious fact—dwell much and often in their presence upon the sufferings and death of our Redeemer. Let them think of Gethsemane, and Gabbatha (Joh 19:13), and Golgotha, and let them learn to sing in plaintive tones of Him Who laid down His life for us. Tell them Who it was that suffered, and why. Yes, though the hymn is hardly to my taste in some of its expressions, I would have the children sing—

*"There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall."*

And I would have them learn such lines as these:

*“He knew how wicked we had been,
And knew that God must punish sin;
So out of pity Jesus said,
He’d bear the punishment instead.”*

And when attention is excited upon the best of themes, let us be ready to explain the great transaction by which God is just, and yet sinners are justified. Children can well understand the doctrine of the expiatory sacrifice; it was meant to be a Gospel for the youngest. The Gospel of substitution is a simplicity, though it is a mystery. We ought not to be content until our little ones know and trust in their finished sacrifice. This is essential knowledge, and the key to all other spiritual teaching. May our dear children know the Cross, and they will have begun well. With all their gettings may they get an understanding of this, and they will have the foundation rightly laid.

This will necessitate your teaching the child his need of a Savior. You must not hold back from this needful task. Do not flatter the child with delusive rubbish about his nature being good and needing to be developed. Tell him he must be born again. Don’t bolster him up with the fancy of his own innocence, but show him his sin. Mention the childish sins to which he is prone, and pray the Holy Spirit to work conviction in his heart and conscience. Deal with the young in much the same way as you would with the old. Be thorough and honest with them. Flimsy religion is neither good for young nor old. These boys and girls need pardon through the precious blood as surely as any of us. Do not hesitate to tell the child his ruin; he will not else desire the remedy. Tell him also of the punishment of sin, and warn him of its terror. Be tender, but be true. Do not hide from the youthful sinner the truth, however terrible it may be. Now that he has come to years of responsibility, if he believes not in Christ, it will go ill with him at the last great day. Set before him the judgment seat, and remind him that he will have to give an account of things done in the body. Labour to arouse the conscience; and pray God the Holy Spirit to work by you till the heart becomes tender and the mind perceives the need of the great salvation.

Children need to learn the doctrine of the Cross that they may find immediate salvation. I thank God that in our Sabbath-school we believe in the salvation of children as children. How very many times has it been my joy to see boys and girls who have come forward to confess their faith in Christ! And I again wish to say that the best converts, the clearest converts, the most intelligent converts we have ever had have been the young ones; and, instead of there being any deficiency in their knowledge of the Word of God, and the doctrines of grace, we have usually found them to have a very delightful acquaintance with the great cardinal truths of Christ. Many of these dear children have been able to speak of the things of God with great pleasure of heart and force of understanding. Go on, dear teachers, and believe that God will save your children. *Be not content to sow principles in their minds that may possibly develop in after years; but **be working for immediate conversion.*** Expect fruit in your children while they are children. Pray for them that

they may not run into the world and fall into the evils of outward sin, and then come back with broken bones to the Good Shepherd; but that they may by God's rich grace be kept from the paths of the destroyer, and grow up in the fold of Christ, first as lambs of His flock, and then as sheep of His hand.

One thing I am sure of, and that is that if we teach the children the doctrine of the atonement in the most unmistakable terms, we shall be doing ourselves good. I sometimes hope that God will revive His Church and restore her to her ancient faith by a gracious work among children. If He would bring into our churches a large influx of young people, how it would tend to quicken the sluggish blood of the supine and sleepy! Child Christians tend to keep the house alive. Oh, for more of them! If the Lord will but help us to teach the children, we shall be teaching ourselves. There is no way of learning like teaching, and you do not know a thing till you can teach it to another. *You do not thoroughly know any truth till you can put it before a child so that he can see it.* In trying to make a little child understand the doctrine of the atonement, you will get clearer views of it yourselves, and therefore I commend the holy exercise to you.

What a mercy it will be if our children are thoroughly grounded in the doctrine of redemption by Christ! If they are warned against the false Gospels of this evil age, and if they are taught to rest on the eternal rock of Christ's finished work, *we may hope to have a generation following us that will maintain the faith, and will be better than their fathers.* Your Sunday-schools are admirable; but what is their purpose if you do not teach the Gospel in them? You get children together and keep them quiet for an hour-and-a-half, and then send them home; but what is the good of it? It may bring some quiet to their fathers and mothers, and that is, perhaps, why they send them to the school; but all the real good lies in what is taught the children. The most fundamental truth should be made most prominent, and what is this but the Cross? Some talk to children about being good boys and girls, and so on; that is to say, they preach the law to the children, though they would preach the Gospel to grown-up people! Is this honest? Is this wise? Children need the Gospel, the whole Gospel, the unadulterated Gospel; they ought to have it, and if they are taught of the Spirit of God they are as capable of receiving it as persons of ripe years. Teach the little ones that Jesus died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Very, very confidently do I leave this work in the hands of the teachers of this school. I never knew a nobler body of Christian men and women; for they are as earnest in their attachment to the old Gospel as they are eager for the winning of souls. Be encouraged, my brothers and sisters: the God Who has saved so many of your children is going to save very many more of them, and we shall have great joy in this Tabernacle as we see hundreds brought to Christ. God grant it, for His name's sake! Amen.

From the sermon "The Blood of Sprinkling and the Children";
booklet available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892): Influential Baptist minister in England. History's most

widely read preacher (apart from those found in Scripture). Today, there is available more material written by Spurgeon than by any other Christian author, living or dead. Born at Kelvedon, Essex.



CHILDREN TO BE EDUCATED FOR CHRIST

Author unknown

THE Church of the Lord Jesus Christ was instituted in this sinful world to seek its conversion. It was said to her eighteen hundred years ago, “preach the Gospel to every creature.” Her time, talents, and resources have all been justly owed to her Lord for this purpose. Yet, “the whole world lieth in wickedness.” Few, comparatively, have heard “the name of Jesus”; “that there is any Holy Ghost”; or that there is a God that ruleth in the earth.

In this affecting moral condition of the world, the questions are to be solemnly considered by the friends of Christ: “Have we not something more to do? Is there not some great duty that we have overlooked; some covenant that we have made with our Lord, yet unfulfilled?” And an answer will be found if we look upon the children of Christian parents, *who have professed to dedicate their all to God, but, to a great extent, have neglected to educate their offspring for the express purpose of serving Christ* in the advancement of His kingdom. Said a Christian mother, whose heart is deeply interested in this subject, “I fear that many of us think that parental duty is limited to labors for the salvation of our children; that we have prayed for them only that they may be saved; instructed them only that they may be saved.” Infinitely important, indeed it is, that they should be saved. But if ardent desires for the glory of our Redeemer and the salvation of souls glowed in our hearts like an inextinguishable flame, our most earnest prayers from their very birth would be that they might not only be saved themselves, but be instrumental in saving others.

So far as the service of Christ has been contemplated, it appears to have been regarded as consisting of becoming a Christian; professing religion; taking care of one’s own soul, maintaining a reputable standing in the church; wishing well to the cause of Christ; giving as much as is convenient for its advancement; and, finally, taking a pious leave of the world to go and be happy in heaven. Thus “one generation passeth away, and another cometh,” to live and die in the same manner. And truly the earth might “abide for ever,” and the mass of its population still lie in ruin, should all Christians continue to live thus.

There is need, then, of an appeal to Christian parents in view of the present condition of the world. You give your prayers and a portion of your money. But, as said the Christian already quoted, “What affectionate parent does not love his children more than his money? And why should not these living treasures be given to Christ?” This “seeking our own, not the things which are Christ’s,” must cease, if the world is ever to be converted. We must act, and teach our children to act more faithfully, according to that Scripture, “He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.”

Let us be understood. We do not say, to dedicate your children to the cause of missions exclusively, or to any field of benevolence. You must leave their assignment to “the Lord of the harvest” (Mat 9:38). He will appoint them to stations, public or private; to spheres of extended or limited influence, as shall seem “good in [his] sight” (Mat 11:26). Your duty is to do all that is comprehended in the injunction, “bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph 6:4), assured that the time will come when it will be said to you by the voice of Providence, respecting each, “the Lord hath need of him” (Mar 11:3); and he will be led to that station in which the Lord will be pleased to bless him. And whether it prove retired and lowly, or public and eminent, be assured of this: he will find work enough assigned him, and responsibilities enough laid upon him, to keep him at the footstool seeking grace to strengthen him, and to require the anxious and diligent employment of all his powers while life shall last.

It is, then, an interesting inquiry for Christians parents: “What **qualifications** will best prepare our children to be efficient servants of Christ?” There are many pertaining to the *heart*, the *mind*, and the *physical constitution*.

1. *First of all, piety.* They must fervently love Christ and his kingdom; heartily consecrate themselves to His service; and be ready for any self-denial, sacrifice, or work to which He may call. Eminent piety it must be, “counting all things but loss for Christ.”

Said one, now the wife of an American missionary, “To make and receive visits, exchange friendly salutations, attend to one’s wardrobe, cultivate a garden, read good and entertaining books, and even attend religious meetings for one’s own enjoyment—all this does not satisfy me. I want to be where every arrangement will have unreserved and constant reference to eternity. On missionary ground I expect to find new and unlooked for trials and hinderances; still, it is my choice to be there, and so far from looking upon it as a difficult task to sacrifice my home and country, I feel as if I should ‘flee as a bird to her mountain.’”

A piety, which thus glows and prays to live, labor, and suffer for Christ, is the first and grand qualification to be sought in your child. It is necessary to act efficiently for Christ anywhere—at home or abroad, in an elevated or a lowly sphere. The Lord Jesus has no work adapted to Christians who live at the “poor dying rate” with which so many are content. It is all work for them that are “strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus,” and willing and determined to be “faithful, even unto death.”

2. *Intellectual qualifications.* It is a great mistake of some that moderate qualifications will suffice for “the work of Christ.” Shall Christians be satisfied with these in the business of the Redeemer’s kingdom, when the men of the world are not in their concerns? Be cautious of perverting dependence upon divine aid, by trusting to warmth of heart to compensate for lack of knowledge. The injunction, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind,” applies to the service as well as love of Him. Your child will need a well-balanced and cultivated mind as much as a pious heart. Let his desires to do good never be frustrated through your neglect of his intellectual education. We are not saying [to] send all your sons to college and your daughters to female seminaries; but prepare them to deal with minds under the dominion of sin anywhere, having intellectual qualifications not to be de-

spised.

3. *Qualifications pertaining to the physical constitution.* The interests of religion have suffered enough through the breaking down of constitutions, and the premature deaths of promising young men. Do not dedicate a feeble, sickly son to the ministry because he is not sufficiently robust for some secular employment or profession. No men more need iron constitutions than ministers and missionaries. "If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person?" (Mal 1:8). You have a daughter whom Providence may call to the self-denials of missionary life. Do not nurse her in the lap of enervating indulgence, or allow her to follow habits and fashions injurious to health, to become a "tender and delicate woman, that will not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground, for very delicateness and tenderness," and who will be at the sport of a morbid sensibility, or a disordered nervous temperament. Will you be satisfied with such an offering to the King of Sion? Will it be kindness to her, who may be called to suffer much, and will want all the capacity for endurance, as well as action, which can be acquired in a most thorough physical education? No: dedicate to Christ and the Church your "young men that are strong," and your daughters prepared to be companions for such in labors and sufferings for Christ.

Thus far of qualifications. We come now to speak more particularly of the **duties of parents** in training sons and daughters for the service of Christ.

1. *Pray much respecting your great work.* "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2Co 2:16), well may you say. But says God, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Keep near the throne of grace with this great subject weighing upon your spirit. Half your work is to be done in your closet. If you fail there, you will fail in all you do out of it. You must have wisdom from above in training servants for the Most High. Commune with God respecting the particular case of each of your children. While you do this you will obtain views of duty which human wisdom never can attain, and feel motives which will be nowhere else rightly appreciated. In the final day, there will, doubtless, be disclosures of transactions of Christian parents with God respecting their children, which will delightfully explain the secret of their devotedness and usefulness. There will then be known more than can be now, respecting the prayers of mothers especially. The mother of Mills had some peculiar exercises in her closet respecting him, which help to account for a remarkable usefulness. The interesting fact is stated in one of our religious journals, that "of one hundred and twenty students in one of our theological seminaries, more than one hundred had been borne by a mother's prayers, and directed by a mother's counsels, to the Savior." See what prayer can do. "Be instant in prayer."

2. *Cultivate a tender sense of parental accountability.* God holds you accountable for the character of your children, so far as fidelity in the use of means is concerned. You are to "give account in the day of judgment for what you do, or neglect to do, for the right formation of your children's characters. You may so educate them that by the sanctifying grace of God, they will be the instruments of salvation to hundreds, yea, thousands; and through your neglect of them, hundreds, thousands, may be lost, and their

blood be required at your hands.² You cannot divest yourself of this responsibility. You must act under it, and meet it “in the Judgment.” Remember this with godly fear, and yet “encourage yourself in the Lord.” If faithful in the closet, and in doing what you there acknowledge your duty, you will find sustaining grace. And the thought will be delightful, as well as solemn, “I am permitted to train these immortals to glorify God in the salvation of souls.”

3. *Have a devoted spirit yourself.* Your soul must be in health and prosper; must burn with love to Christ and His kingdom; and all your instructions be enforced by a godly example, if you would lead your children to live devotedly. The father of a large family, most of them pious, was asked, “What means have you employed with your children?” “I have endeavored so to live,” said he, “as to show them that it was my own grand purpose to go to heaven, and to take them along with me.”

4. *Give religious instruction early.* Watch [for] opportunities for this in every stage of childhood. Early impressions will last through life, when later ones fade away. Said an American missionary, “I recollect particularly, that once my mother came and stood by me as I sat in the door, and tenderly talked to me of God and my soul’s concerns; and her tears dropped upon my head. That made me a missionary.” Cecil says, “I had a pious mother, who dropped things in my way. I could never rid myself of them. I was a professed infidel, but then I liked to be an infidel in company rather than alone. I was wretched by myself. Parental influence thus cleaves to a man; it harasses him; it throws itself continually in his way.” John Newton never could divest himself of the impressions of his mother’s instructions.

5. *Seek the early conversion of your children.* Regard every day of their continuance out of Christ as an increase of their danger and guilt. “A mother,” says a missionary, “who had brought up a large family, all of whom had become hopefully pious, was asked what means she had used for their conversion. She replied, ‘I have felt that if not converted before seven or eight years of age, they would probably be lost; and when they have approached that age, have been in agony lest they should pass it impenitent; and have gone to the Lord with my anguish. He has not turned away my prayers nor His mercy from me.’” Pray for this: “Arise, cry out in the night; in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord; lift up thy hands towards Him, for the life of thy young children.” Hope for the early bestowment of divine grace from such promises as this: “I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, and as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the LORD’S; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD and surname himself by the name of Israel” (Isa 44:3-5). The history of some families is a delightful

² **their blood be required at your hands** – the author is preaching a message of exhortation for parents to take their duties very seriously. However, one should not overextend the author’s words to imply that the salvation of the children is a result of the parents’ training! No, Scripture makes clear: believers’ service to God gives Him glory when they entrust all the results into His hands. God’s glory must be our focus, not the results.

fulfillment of this promise. Young hearts are the best in which to lay, deep and broad, the foundations of usefulness. There is no hope that your child will do anything for Christ till you can see him at the foot of the Cross, repenting, believing, devoting himself.

It seems supposed by some that religion cannot enter a child's mind: that it demands maturity of years to "repent and believe the Gospel." A Christian child, therefore, seems often regarded as a prodigy; and grace in a young soul is a dispensation of divine mercy too unusual to be expected in the use of common means. "Parents," said a mother, "labor and pray prospectively for the conversion of their children." We have seen parents weeping over deceased children of four, five, six, seven years, who seemed to feel no solicitude whether they had died in a safe spiritual state, nor self-reproach for neglect to labor for their conversion. It is an interesting fact, and a serious one in its bearing upon parental neglect, that *children under the age of four years have been known to feel deep convictions of sin* against God, and of their ruined state; and to sorrow for sin, believe on Christ, fix their affections on God and to exhibit all the evidences of grace seen in persons of adult years. The late Mrs. Huntington, writing to her son, says her biographer, "speaks of having a distinct remembrance of a solemn consultation in her mind, when about three years old, whether it was best to be a Christian then or not, and of having come to the decision that it was not." The biographies of Janeway, and numerous others, forbid the idea that religion in a young heart is a miracle, and show that parents have reason to be anxious lest their young children die without hope, as well as to be encouraged to seek their early conversion.

We should be cautious of unreasonable distrust of apparent conversions of children. Watch over the little disciple affectionately, faithfully. His tender years plead for more careful and tender protection. Give him not occasion to say, "I have been neglected, because supposed too young to be a Christian." True, parents and pastors have been often disappointed in children seemingly converted. But the day of judgment may reveal that there have been more cases of undetected deception and hypocrisy in adults, than disappointments respecting children supposed pious. Childhood is more guileless than manhood: sooner, perhaps always, throws off the mask, if it be but the mask, of religion; and is again open to conviction—perhaps becomes converted. Manhood—more cautious, deceitful, adventurous in false profession—wears the mask, shuts out conviction, cries "peace and safety," and goes on decently, solemnly, formally, down to hell.

Desire the early conversion of your children, that they may have the longest possible time in this world to serve Christ. If "the dew of our youth" be devoted to God, advancing years are sure to be marked with proportionate maturity of Christian character and fitness for more efficient labors for Christ.

6. *Maintain familiar Christian intercourse with your children.* Converse with them as freely and affectionately on religious subjects as on others. If you are a warmhearted and prosperous Christian, you will do this naturally and easily. Let religious intimacy be interwoven with your whole family habits. You will thus know how to counsel, caution, reprove, encourage; what advances they make; what the "reason of the hope that is in"

them (1Pe 3:15); for what particular department of service for Christ they are fitted. And if they die early, or before you, then you will have the consolation of having watched and known the progress of their preparation to “depart, and to be with Christ” (Phi 1:23).

7. *Place and keep before the mind of your child, as the great object for which he should live, the glory of God and the salvation of men.* We do much to give direction to the mind and form the character of the man by placing an object, for life, before him. Men of the world know and act on this principle. So should the Christian. The object above-named is the only one worthy of an immortal and renewed soul, and prepares the way for the noblest elevation of character: it will raise him above living to himself and constrain him to fidelity in his Lord’s service. Teach him to lay at the foot of the Cross attainments, eminence, influence, honor, wealth—all things; and to live in the desire, “Father, glorify thy name” (Joh 12:28).

8. *Choose instructors for your children with great care.* Know to whose influence you commit the son or daughter of your vows. You have a great and sacred object to accomplish. The teachers of your children must be such as will aid you in that object. Correct moral character in a teacher is not enough. This is often allied with most dangerous religious opinions. Your child should be placed under the care of a self-dedicated teacher, who will feel in relation to his charge, “I am to aid this parent in training a servant for Christ.” In your choice of a school or seminary of learning, never be governed merely by its reputation as literary, fashionable, popular—irrespective of the possibility that its atmosphere may have no vitality from decided religious influence, or may even be poisoned by erroneous religious views in the instructors. Respecting sending a daughter to a Catholic convent for education, said a judicious pastor to a parishioner, “If you do not wish your daughter to be burned, you must not put her into the fire.”³ A widow was offered the education of one of her sons at a university where prevailed the influence of Unitarianism. She declined the offer, trusting in God to enable her to accomplish it in a safer situation. Her firmness and faith were rewarded with success. A young lady was placed under the care of a teacher who was not pious. When her mind was deeply interested and anxious on religious subjects, the idea, “what will my teacher think of me,” and the dread of her indifference—perhaps contempt—influenced her decision, and she grieved away the Spirit of God. Christian parent, your prayers, your best efforts, may all be frustrated by the influence of a teacher who has no religion.

9. *Be cautious of defeating your own efforts for the spiritual welfare of your children.* Neglect of some essential duty, though you may perform many others, will do this. Prayer without instruction will not do; nor instruction without a right example; nor prayer in the family without earnest wrestlings in the closet; nor all these together without watching over them to keep them out of temptation. Be afraid of indulging them in vain amusements. A mother once went to a meeting of her female friends and asked their supplications for her daughter, whom it appeared she had permitted, at that very time,

³ How much more does this apply to the government school system today with its sex education, evolutionism, and general ridicule of God.

to attend a dancing party. She justified herself in the rashness and inconsistency of the permission by reference to her own early habits of seeking amusements. If parents will permit their children to run directly into “the snare of the devil,” let them, at least, not mock God by entreating Christians to pray that He will take care of them there! If they do, let them not wonder if their children live “the servants of sin,” and die the “vessels of wrath” (Rom 6:17; 9:22).

Guard yourself against setting them the example of fitfulness in religion: now, all fervor and bustle; then, languid, having scarce the breath of spiritual life. A considerate son or daughter will say, “My father’s religion is one of fits and starts, of times and seasons. It is everything now, but it will soon be nothing, as before.” If you would have your children serve Christ in uniform activity, do so yourself. Be afraid of that periodical religion, which all at once breaks out from the midst of worldliness and unfaithfulness, and in which feeling shows itself like “a deceitful brook.” Or, as some author has expressed it, “like a mountain torrent, swollen by spring floods, foaming, roaring, dashing along; seeming a mighty and permanent river; but which, after a few days, sinks away, becomes a mere rivulet, or comes to nothing; leaving a channel dry, rocky, silent as death.” The deepest piety is like the deep, full river: noiseless, fed by living springs, never disappointing, always flowing, fertilizing, beautifying. Be of that humble, steadfast, heartfelt, industrious, active cast of Christian character, by which your children shall see that the service of Christ is the great business of life, and be constrained to enter into it “with all their hearts.”

10. *Be cautious of countenancing your children in living “after the manner of this world”*—in seeking its honors, entering into its ambitious strifes, its secularizing habits and fashions. The children of pious parents must not be found among the votaries of fashion, emulating their display and useless accomplishments. “How is Christ thus robbed of His own?” said a Christian parent. “I have observed many instances of parents, exemplary, faithful, and judicious with their children, till perhaps fifteen years old; and then the desire to have them associate with distinguished people, and the dread of having them singular would cause them to turn right about and dress them like worldly people, and even court their intimacy for them.” And parents have smarted severely under the rod of divine chastisement—been mortified, yea, had their hearts broken for such sins, in their disastrous consequences to the character of their children.

11. *Be cautious what views and feelings you foster in your children respecting property.* The love of property, in families called Christian, is one of the greatest hindrances to the spread of the Gospel. The systems of Christian benevolence are all embarrassed, every year, from this cause. Parents set their children the example of “making haste to be rich,” as though this were all for which God made them. They give a pittance to the cause of Christ. And sons and daughters follow in the same course, even after having professed to know the way of holy boldness and said, “we are not our own.” Facts might be mentioned that would make any true-hearted Christian blush for the Church of God. Teach your children to remember what God has said: “The silver is mine, and the gold is mine” (Hag 2:8). Remind them that you and they are stewards who are going to give up your account. Treat the ac-

quirement of property as of importance only that you may do good and honor Christ. Let not your children expect you to make them heirs to large possessions. Let them see you annually giving, "as God has prospered you," to all the great objects of Christian benevolence. They will follow your example when you have gone to your reward. To leave your children the inheritance of your own devoted spirit and benevolent habits will be infinitely more desirable than to bequeath to them "thousands of gold and silver." Such examples we have seen.

As an aid to this, every parent should teach his family economy as a matter of religious principle. [Seek to have] early gain over their consciences to the side of a benevolent, spirited economy. Teach them that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Act 20:35); to write "holiness to the Lord" upon their pocket money instead of spending it for useless or hurtful indulgences; to study simplicity and economy in dress, furniture, style of living; and to regard all useless expenditure of money as sin against God.

12. *Be cautious of frustrating your efforts for the spiritual good of your children by wrong habits in your family.* [Some examples are] levity in conversation, dull and hasty formality in family worship, and worldly conversation on the Sabbath. Censorious remarks, we fear, keep whole families of children in the neglect of religion. Guard also against gloom, sanctimoniousness, moroseness. Some professing parents seem to have just religion enough to make them unhappy, and to have all the unloveliness in religious temperament and habits that naturally comes of having consciences irritated by their unfaithful "manner of life." There is a heavenly cheerfulness and sweetness in some Christians, which declares to their families that religion is a blessing as well as serious reality; and gives them an inestimable influence and power to win them to the service of Christ. Cultivate this. Let "the love of God, shed abroad in [your] hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Rom 5:5), continually prove to your children that religion is the source of the truest enjoyment, of the richest blessings.

13. *If you would have your children obedient servants of Christ, you must govern them well. Subordination is one grand law of His kingdom.* Implicit obedience to your authority will well accord with the submission your child must render to Christ. How must the habit of insubordination and self-will increase the sorrows of his Christian conflict; render him often unamiable and uncomfortable in his social and domestic relations; and in the church an unmanageable member, or an unlovely minister; or, if in the missionary work, an occasion of trials, frequent and bitter, to all his associates. Said a minister, respecting a departed member of his church, for whom he hoped the best he could, "He was one of the stubbornest oaks that ever grew upon Mount Zion."

A child well-governed, when he becomes a Christian, is ready to "serve the Lord Jesus Christ, with all humility of mind" in any work to which he is called, and will work kindly, harmoniously, and efficiently with others. He enters his Lord's field saying, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God" (Heb 10:9). He will have that heavenly spirit, "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2Co 10:1), and as he goes forward from duty to duty, will be able to say with David, "my soul is even as a weaned child" (Psa 131:2). "I delight to

do thy will, O my God” (Psa 40:8)! And with such a spirit he will find precious satisfaction in a life of successful labor for his Lord on earth, and “in hope of the glory of God.”

That by a right government your children may be fitted to serve Christ, study the manner in which a holy God governs. His is the government of a Father: persuasive without weakness; in love and mercy, and yet in accordance with justice; patient and forbearing, yet strict in the rebuke and punishment of offences. He loves His children, but chastens them for their profit; employs encouragements to obedience, but in His determination to be obeyed, He is firm as His own everlasting throne. He gives His children every reason to fear offending Him; still He assures that to love and serve Him shall be to them the beginning of heaven on earth.

We have incidentally spoken of the interest of *mothers* in this subject. Maternal duty and influence, in truth, lie at the foundation of the whole work of educating children for the service of Christ. A Christian mother may more richly bless the world, through her children, than many who have sat on thrones. Mothers! Divine providence places your children under your peculiar care at that period of life when first and eternal impressions will be made.

Let your influence be “sanctified by the word of God and prayer” (1Ti 4:5), and consecrated to the high object of educating sons and daughters for “the work of Christ” (Phi 2:30).

Brethren in the sacred office of the ministry: Have we done what we could, or estimated our responsibilities, relative to this subject, as we ought? Have our labors been conducted with sufficient reference to our younger hearers, and their preparations to serve “the Lord of the harvest”? A minister should acquaint himself with the children of his charge, and know what their parents are doing for their good and their preparation to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. We must act steadily and efficiently on the minds of parents; preach to them; converse with them; prompt their consciences respecting their duties. We should sit down with them in the retirement of their homes, and ask them such questions as these: What are your views of your duty to God respecting your children? What are your expectations relative to their future usefulness to the kingdom of God on earth? Are you fulfilling your duty with your eyes on the judgmentseat of Christ? What means do you employ that you may realize your expectations? Do you wish to see the glory of God, and the conversion of this lost world, aided by “the children God has graciously given you”? Such inquiries, made in the affectionate seriousness of watchmen for souls, will come home to hearts in which there is grace; [they] will awaken to thoughtfulness and quicken to activity. We shall assist parents to see how they and their families stand related to God and to this revolted world. And if we would promote their personal prosperity in the divine life, there is no way better than this [to] stimulate them to their high and solemn duties.

Christian parents: Our children have too long been educated without that direct and single reference to the glory of Christ, and the good of this fallen world, which becomes us. Their dedication to the work of Christ, too, has been exceedingly imperfect. For this reason, among others, the work of evangelizing the world has gone on slowly. To address

you in the language of a Christian parent whose feelings are deeply interested in this subject, "There is much justly said of the duty of Christians to hold their property consecrated to Christ; and it is often remarked that till they act upon higher principles, the world cannot be converted." It is true; but our delinquency here is not the basis of our unfaithfulness. It is to be feared that many who feel their obligations respecting their property, forget that they are answerable to Christ, to the Church, and to the heathen, for their children. *Thousands [in] gold and silver are wanted to carry on the work of evangelizing the world; but a thousand sanctified minds will do more than millions of money.* And, when the children of pious parents, with the spirit of true Christians, shall give themselves for the saving of the world, there will be no more any "dark places, full of the habitations of cruelty."

Has a greater duty ever rested on men than that which binds them to educate their children for the benefit of the world? Were this our constant, prominent desire, it would give definiteness to our instructions and prayers; we should watch against every habit or influence that would hinder the accomplishment of our wishes. Our children would be taught self-government, self-denial, industry, and effort. We should not be guilty of such a miserable wavering between Christ and the world. Every parent would know for what he was training his children. Every child would know for what he was living. His conscience would feel the pressure of duty. He could not be faithless to the object set before him without violating his conscience. Would not such education be owned and blessed of the Spirit of God, and our children be converted early? Then their powers would all be given to God.

Christian parents, *whatsoever our hand findeth to do, let us do it with our might* (Ecc 9:10). The pupilage of our children is passing away on the swift wings of time. Let us enter into the spirit of the first propagators of Christianity and take our children along with us in the labors of love. Let our aim be at higher attainments in piety. "The feeble" should become "as David, and David as the Son of God." It must cease to be that a few men and women only, in a century, shall appear with the spirit of Taylor, Brainerd, Martyn, and of Livingston. There ought to be Christians of their standard in every church. Yea, why should not every church be composed of such, so that the places of their abode should become "too strait for them"; and they, with "the love of Christ constraining them," go forth in the untiring spirit of Christian enterprise over the whole face of the earth. With such pillars and "polished stones" the temple of the Lord would indeed be beautiful. Blessed with such supporters of the cause of Christ at home, the Church will be strong for her Lord's work. Blessed with such messengers of salvation to the heathen, the work of evangelizing the nations will go rapidly on. As they go forth and proclaim the Savior's love, there will break forth from all "the dark places" the cry, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isa 52:7).